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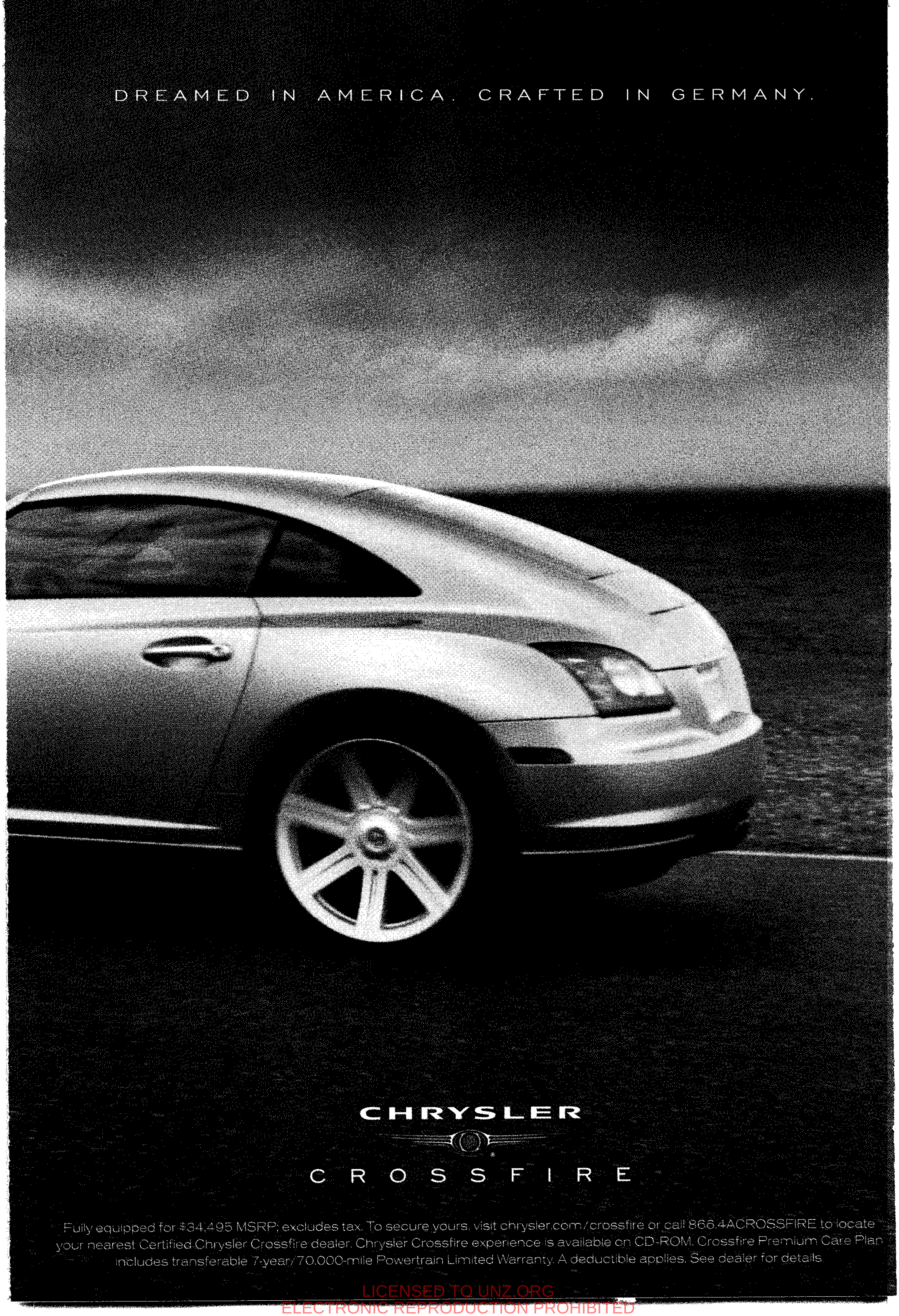
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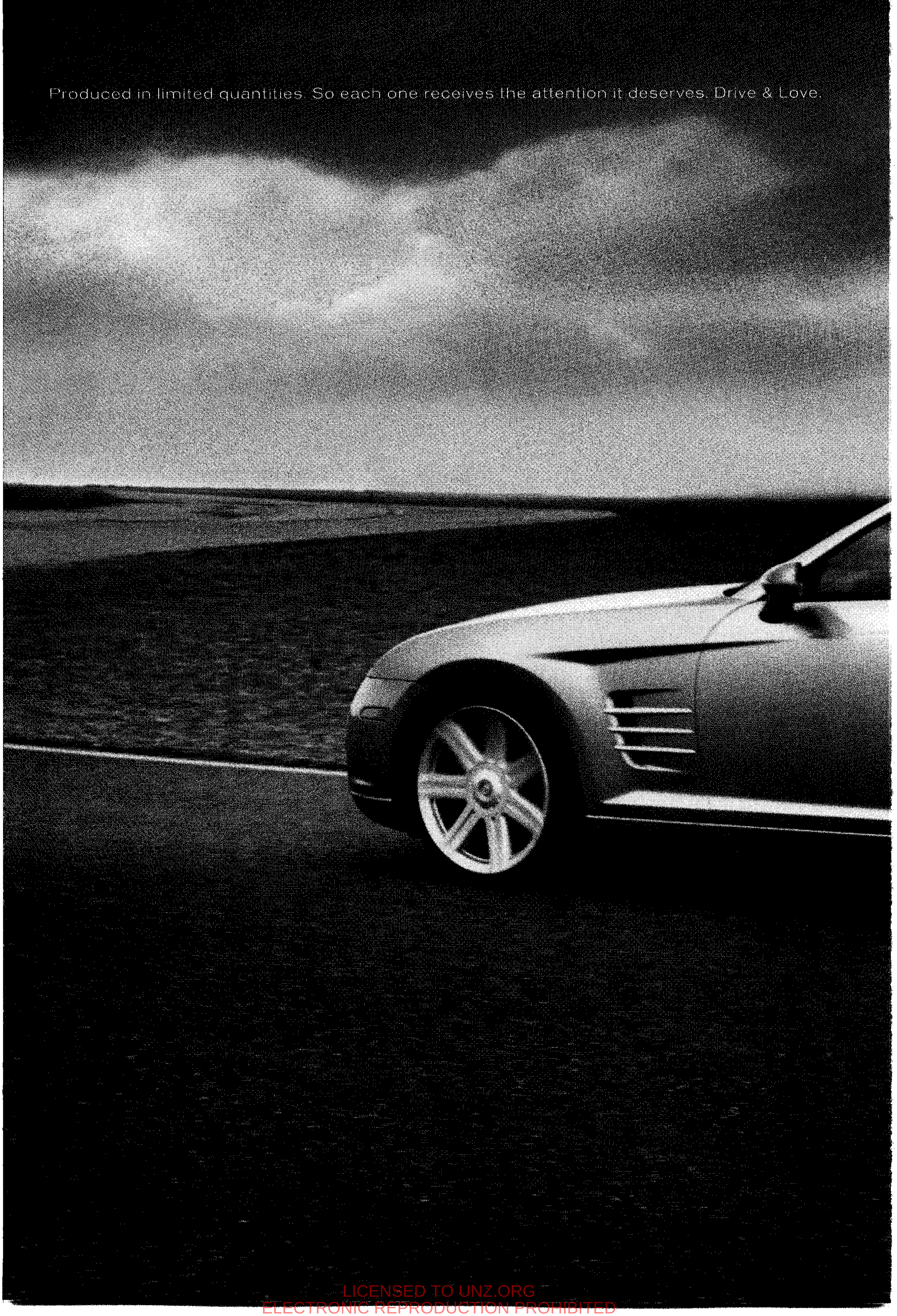
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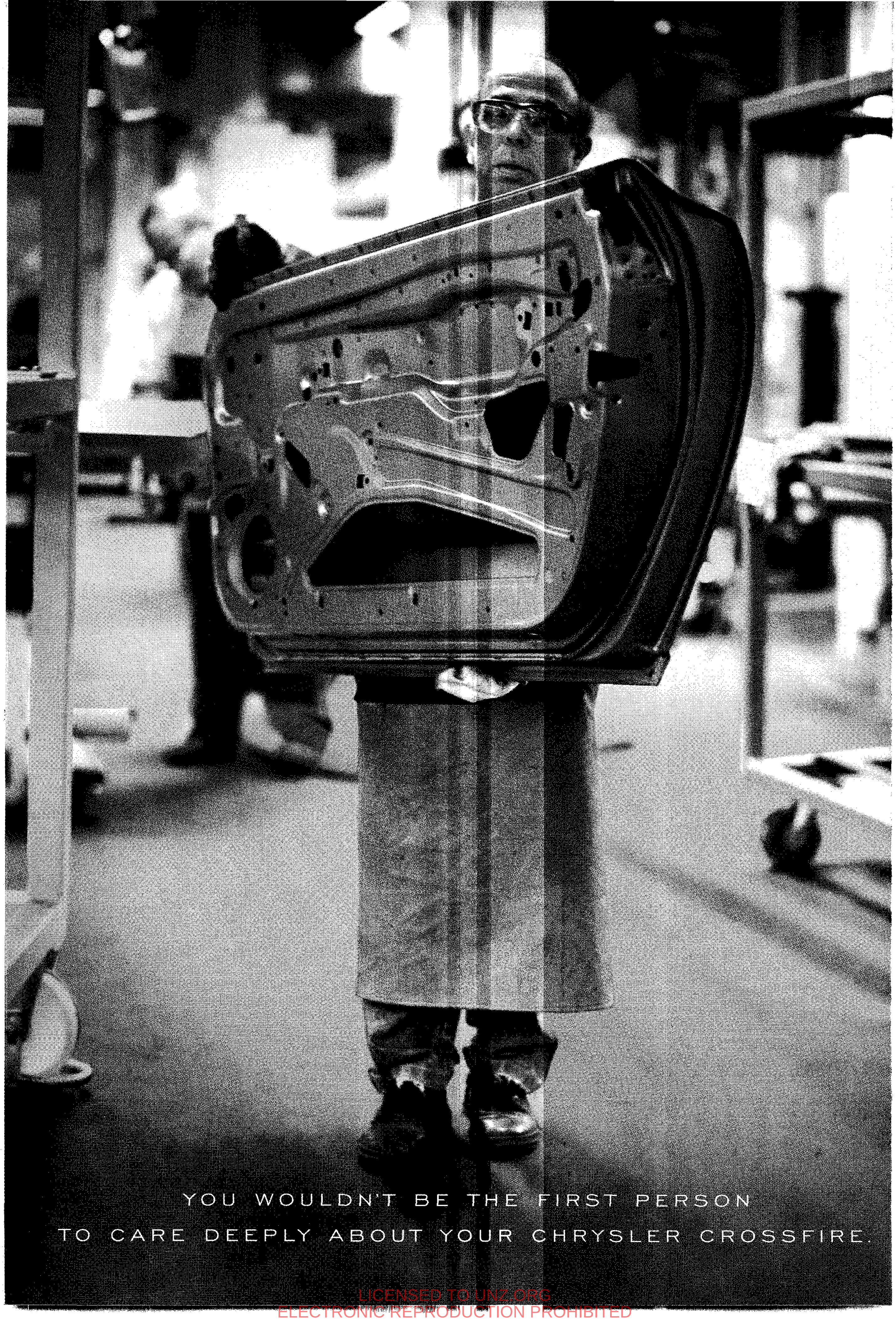
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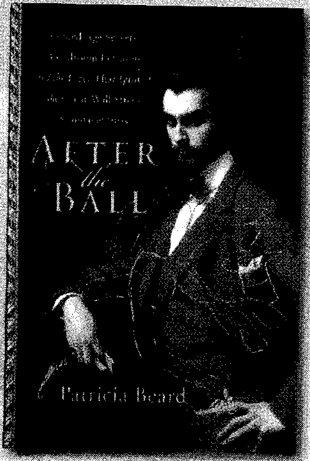
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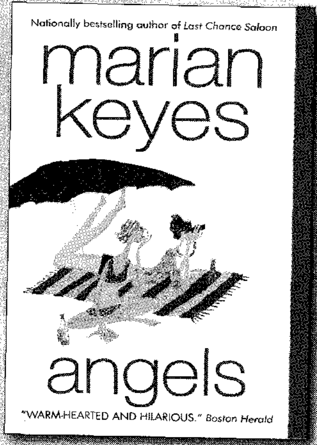
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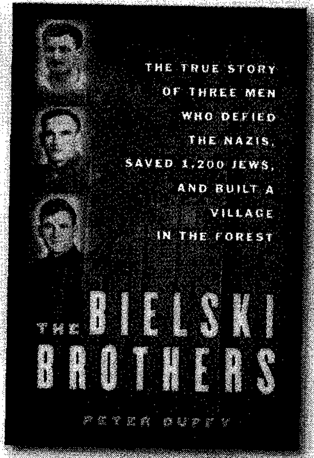
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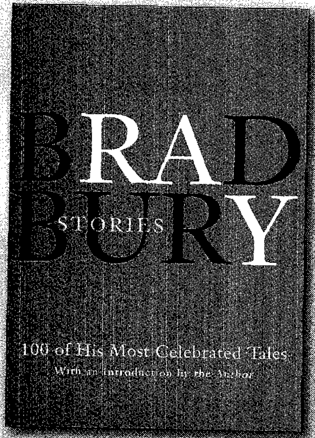
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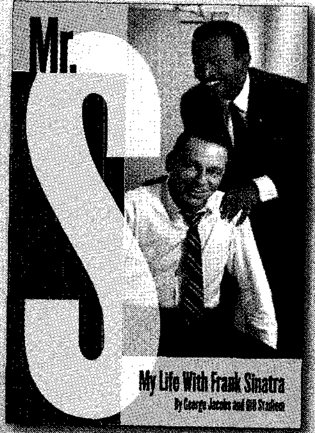
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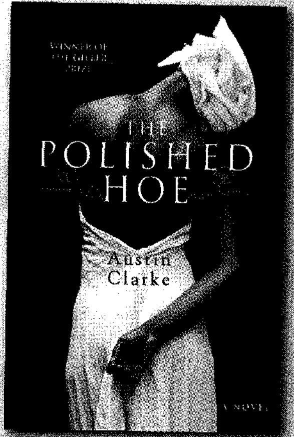
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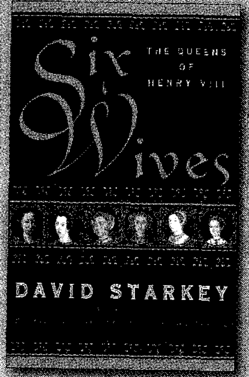
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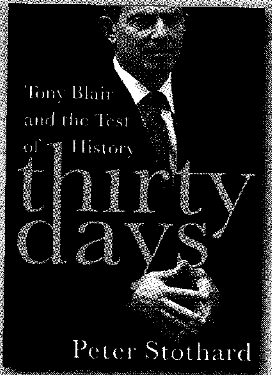
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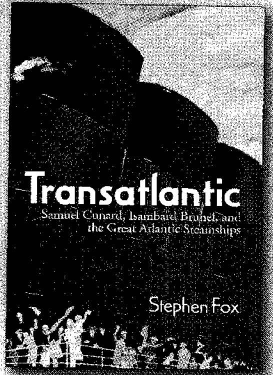
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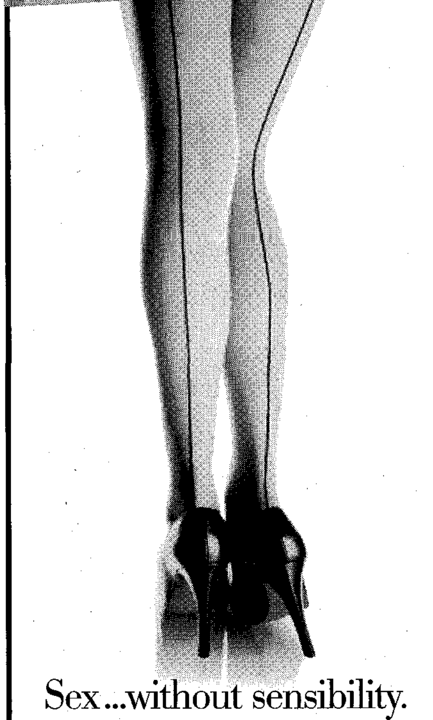

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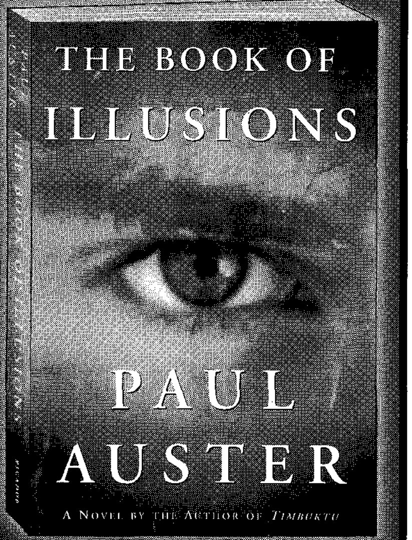

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Jane Mayer ("The Search for Osama," p. 26) is a staff writer and the co-author of "Strange Justice" and "Landslide."

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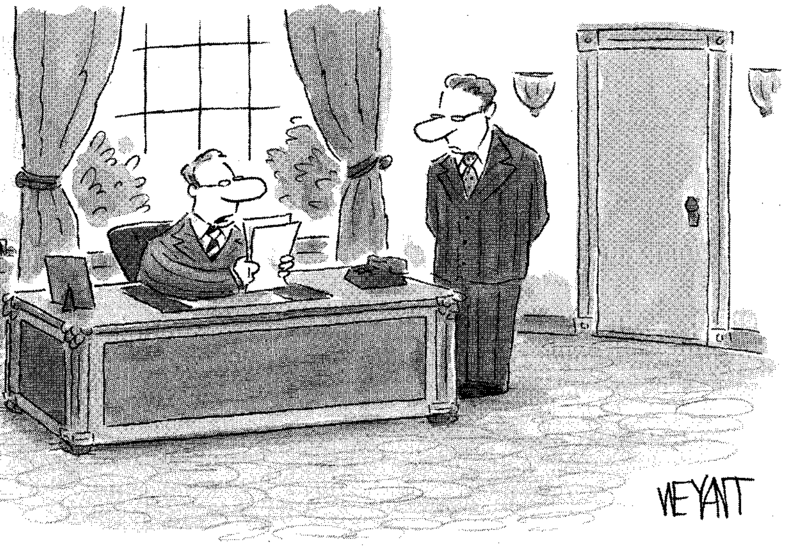

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THE MAIL

RELIEF FOR THE RED SOX?

The thought of Bill James, the author of the "Baseball Abstract" and now a member of the Boston Red Sox' front office, "trying to project a future without [Pedro] Martinez or the All-Star shortstop Nomar Garciaparra," as Ben McGrath writes, brings back very bad memories (The Sporting Scene, July 14th & 21st). Granted, both players will soon be over thirty, past what James's studies would suggest was their peak. But Roger Clemens pitched brilliantly for years for the Red Sox until 1996, when Dan Duquette (the general manager that Bostonians would rather forget) decided he was past his prime. Duquette bet on Carl Pavano and Brian Rose to succeed the Rocket. To date, Pavano has had an adequate career with several teams, Rose has barely stayed in pro ball, and Clemens is headed to the Hall of Fame—probably as a Yankee. Bill James has been given a mandate: beat the Yankees. He should recognize that, for the Red Sox today, an old Nomar is better than no Nomar.

Stephen Persing
Wethersfield, Conn.

I have been a Bill James fan since I first encountered his Abstract, more than twenty years ago. But the way in which the Red Sox have tried to implement James's ideas about relief pitching, especially what has been called the "closer by committee" method, has made little sense so far. In his Abstract, James articulately stressed the importance of relief pitchers, and throughout the nineteen-eighties he pounded, pounded, pounded his readers about the greatness of Dan Quisenberry, the relief ace for his beloved Kansas City Royals. So why torture Boston fans with the current, aceless bullpen?

Jim Harris
Iowa City, Iowa

THE PRICE OF MOZART

James Surowiecki, in his discussion of deflation, raises the spectre of Baumol's cost disease—in which wages rise as productivity increases across the economy, even in sectors with slower productivity growth, since they must compete for the same workers, thus increasing costs (The Talk of the Town, July 7th). He cites examples of workers who supposedly can't be any more productive than they were years ago: musicians performing a Mozart string quintet can't play any faster, college professors can give only so many lectures, and nurses check on only so many patients. But this reflects a misunderstanding of productivity, which economists define as the ratio of the value of outputs to the value of inputs. Technology has, for example, enormously increased the productivity of musicians: the input, the value of the time it takes the musicians to play the piece, may be the same as in Mozart's time, but the output now includes the value of recordings that are sold. Likewise, the input of professors may be static, in terms of papers graded and lectures given, but the output, the value of the knowledge transferred, is not. One crude way to measure that value is in terms of the earnings of college graduates relative to those of, say, high-school graduates, which have been more than keeping pace with the investment. And when we talk about health-care costs we are, again, referring mostly to inputs: the costs per hospital day, or of drugs. Establishing the value of output may not be so easy—the lives saved, the reduction in pain and suffering—but that does not mean we should use the rising costs of health inputs as evidence that there is no, or little, increase in the productivity of health-care workers. Their work, like that of other service employees, is too often mismeasured.

Robinson Hollister
Professor of Economics, Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pa.

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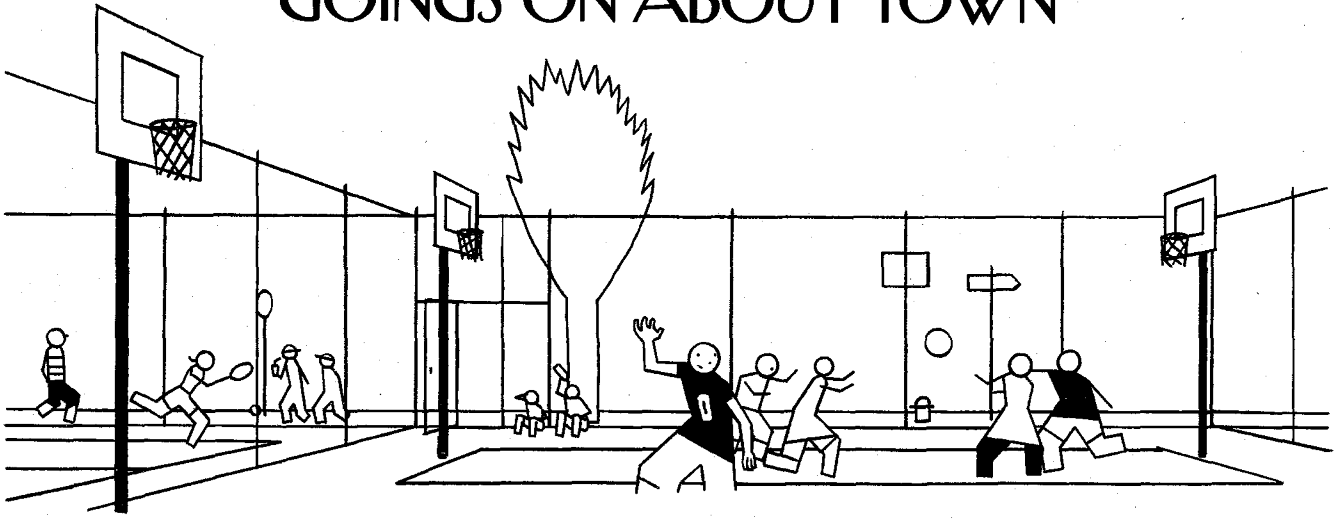

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

AVENUE Q
The joyful and jaundiced hit musical—a teasing update of "Sesame Street" for adults—comes to Broadway. Opens July 31 at 7. Directed by Jason Moore. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

BLUEPRINT SERIES
The Ontological Theatre presents its annual showcase of work by young experimental-theatre directors, in which Timothy Braun, Josh Hecht, Young Jean Lee, and Eric Powers direct four different plays, variously inspired by "Alice in Wonderland," Dr. Fu Manchu, and two stories about unlucky girls. The series ends Aug. 3. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-533-4650.)

CARNIVAL KNOWLEDGE
The Coney Island impresario Todd Robbins brings a motley crew of sideshow icons to the SoHo Playhouse for an open-ended series of performances by the Human Blockhead, Twistina the Rubber Lady, the dwarf king Little Jimmy, the Flying Ebola Brothers, and other freaks and geeks from the carny world's memory lane. In previews. (15 Vandam St. 212-239-6200.)

KING LEAR
Jonathan Epstein plays the title role in the Shakespeare & Company production of the tragedy in the Berkshires, which runs in repertory with "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)." In previews. Opens Aug. 2 at 8. (Founders' Theatre, Lenox, Mass. For information, call 413-637-3353 or see www.shakespeare.org.)

LILIA!
In this autobiographical one-woman show, the playwright Libby Skala plays both herself and her indomitable, Viennese-born grandmother, Lilia Skala, who was nominated for an Academy Award for "Lilies of the Field" in 1963, and who also acted in "Flashdance" and "House of Games." July 31 at 4. Part of the Midtown International Theatre Festival, a showcase of some two dozen plays, which runs through Aug. 3. For festival information, see www.midtownfestival.org. (Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex, 312 W. 36th St. 212-279-4200.)

MATT & BEN
That's Damon and Affleck, should you need to be told. Brenda Withers and Mindy Kaling's comedy from the 2002 Fringe Festival—in which the two women play the two actors in their pre-supernova phase—gets an Off Broadway run at P.S. 122. Directed by David Warren. In previews. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-477-5288.)

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THE MYOPIA: AN EPIC BURLESQUE OF TRAGIC PROPORTION
In David Greenspan's one-man play, the protagonist is writing a play about his father, who is writing a musical. Opens July 30 at 7, as part of the Ice Factory 2003 theatre festival, which runs through Aug. 16. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 212-966-2844. For full festival schedule, call the box office.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BIG RIVER
Deaf West Theatre and Roundabout Theatre Company present an adaptation of the musical based on Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," which includes deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing actors, performing in spoken English and American Sign Language. Directed by Jeff Calhoun. (American Airlines, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

THE CAPITOL STEPS
The satirical Washington, D.C.-based musical group brings its newest show, "Between Iraq and a Hard Place," to the John Houseman Theatre. (450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM
In a play that blends the reverential gusto of a "Loser's Lounge" covers show with a rambling dramatic structure that is part Elaine Stritch and part twelve-step confession, "Papa" Denny Doherty, a founding member of the Mamas and the Papas, reminisces about his group's heyday in Greenwich Village and California and sings their hits in his sweet tenor—backed by a band that includes young doubles for Mama Cass, John Phillips, and the red-hot hippie Mama Michelle. Directed by Randal Myler. (Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

EDGE
Angelica Torn is Sylvia Plath in a new play about the poet, set on the last day of her life. Written and directed by Paul Alexander. (DR2 Theatre, 103 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

FLESH AND BLOOD
This scintillating family saga, adapted by Peter Gaitens from Michael Cunningham's 1995 novel, begins its elegiac trajectory in 1949, when an eager, provincial sixteen-year-old named Mary (the superb Cherry Jones) marries a burly Greek immigrant, Constantine Stassos (expertly played by John Sierros). Mary's husband never quite gets the language or the point of the abundant world he bustles through, and Mary projects her ambitions, instead, onto her son, Billy (Gaitens), the only one of her three children she feels she understands. Billy grows up to be a homosexual; her well-married daughter, Susan (Jessica Hecht), has a child who seems to be the result of a fling with a gardener; and the youngest child, Zoe (Martha Plimpton), wanders into promiscuity and drugs. The plotlines are deftly crosshatched by Gaitens's bold narrative construction, and Doug Hughes' poised direction keeps the pace and the poignancy clear. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/28/03.) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

GETTING INTO HEAVEN
Cat Venita (Polly Draper) is a fortysomething, multiply pierced, liberally tattooed rock goddess, who's just successful enough to gripe about never having won a Grammy. She's also a lesbian whose lover has just left her, following the death of their son. In the play (which she wrote), Draper expertly portrays what it is to be a woman perpetually on the edge. With an MTV-inspired, multimedia set by Junghyun Georgia Lee and a score by Draper's husband, Michael Wolff. Claire Lundberg directs. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101. Closes Aug. 2.)

HENRY V
Shakespeare's history of the grownup Prince Hal's bid to consolidate his kingship is the playwright's version of three-card monte: what you see is never what you get. What seems, on the surface, a panegyric to the victor of the battle of Agincourt is, in the ironies of its structure and the antitheses of its speech, a cunning commentary on the hypocrisy of political personality. The prodigal prince, having ascended the throne, has been born again as a soldier king. For this exemplar of elusive charm and steely willfulness, a man whose heroic presence is somehow shrouded in solitude, Liev Schreiber is heaven-sent casting. At once compelling and unreachable, he has a swiftness of mind which convinces the audience that language is being coined in the moment. His speech, unlike that of the merely adequate supporting cast, feels lived rather than learned. With the kittenish Nicole Leach as Princess Katherine of France, and with lively, if uneven, direction by Mark Wing-Davey. (7/28/03) (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750.)

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT
In a stately and compelling production at the Plymouth, Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece has been superbly revived, bringing O'Neill's own spectral, heartbroken family—"the four haunted Tyrones," he called them—to the stage. Vanessa Redgrave and Brian

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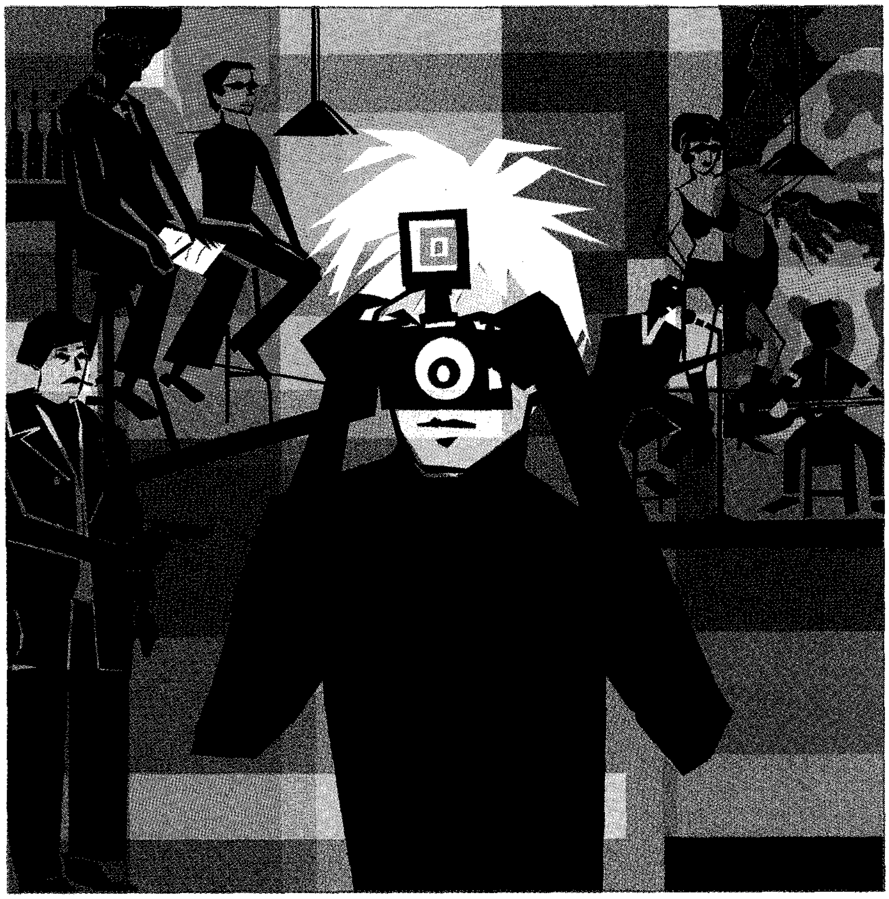
Dennehy play Mary and James Tyrone, and Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robert Sean Leonard are their sons, Jamie and Edmund. Redgrave, lyrical and feral, moves like a trapped animal in a cage of her own choosing. And Hoffman's toxic sorrow in his fight with his brother kicks the play onto a completely new emotional level. Directed by Robert Falls. (5/19/03) (Brooks Atkinson, 236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

MACBETH
The Classical Theatre of Harlem opens its fifth season with a new production of Shakespeare's tragedy, starring Ty Jones. Directed by Alfred Preisser. (C.T.H. Courtyard Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., near 141st St. 212-868-4444. Closes Aug. 3.)

in the Oval Office with Napoleon and Alexander Hamilton, and belted his stump speech and tariff laws as "Tommy"-esque rock ballads. He also was haunted by visions of a man-size crab that stalked him in his sleep like a rose-colored "Big Fig" Newton with pincers. Uneven but inspired, the show suggests a Tom Lehrer song channelled through an acid trip. Composer and playwright Jarrow hams it up at the piano, as President, groupies, and grifters sing his songs of misguided hope and looming doom. With an energetic young cast, well directed by Alex Timbers, who has a sketch comic's instinct for physical comedy. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-868-4444. Closes Aug. 3.)



T. Ryder Smith as Andy Warhol in "Tragedy in 9 Lives," at P.S. 122.

KIM DEMARCO

NINE
In this elegant revival of Arthur Kopit and Maury Yeston's 1982 musical—an adaptation of Fellini's "8½"—Antonio Banderas plays Guido Contini, a film director whose genius is inextricable from his childlike narcissism. Good-looking, confident, and amusing, Banderas has a European restraint that only magnifies his passionate nature. He also has a fine voice. The other characters are satellites around Planet Guido: his put-upon wife (Mary Stuart Masterson), his battle-axe producer (Chita Rivera), and his tenacious and lubricious mistress, Carla (Jane Krakowski), who descends semi-nude from the rafters. Directed by David Leveaux. (4/21 & 28/03) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

PIECES (OF ASS)
That hot chicks with *Maxim*-calibre posteriors and picture-perfect *punims* actually experience pain in their lives is not much of a revelation. However, watching thirteen stunning, hard-bodied women soften, one by one, into emotionally pliable raconteuses is something of a uniquely gratifying experience. Directed and conceived by Brian Howie. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-868-4444. Closes Aug. 3.)

PRESIDENT HARDING IS A ROCK STAR
In the manic imagination of this show's creator, the blond, impish-kid-brother-faced Kyle Jarrow, President Warren G. Harding wore black leather pants and a shirt ripped open to the navel, snorted coke

THE SUMMER OF THE SWANS
Julia Jordan's mood-perfect adaptation of Betsy Byars's book about a thirteen-year-old girl who struggles with adolescent awkwardness, a too-pretty older sister, and a disabled, mute brother, is one of the most grownup plays in town. On a marvellously expressive set by James Wolk, ceiling-height seventies-era *Seventeen* magazine covers form a backdrop that unfolds into a suburban lawn, a TV room, or a sun-dappled wood, where Sara (Kate Wetherhead) stews at the unfairness of life, cossets and chivvies at her brother, watches swans take flight, and almost has her first kiss. Wetherhead perfectly calibrates Sara's dual impulses to sulkiness and generosity; Bethany Butler is deliciously untouchable as the idolized older sister so lucky in looks that she doesn't need a tortured internal life; and Dustin Sullivan is terrific as Joe Melby, the boy next door Sara would have a crush on if she weren't too much of a tomboy to admit it. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. Tickets are free, and are first come, first served. For information, call 212-642-6754.)

TRAGEDY IN 9 LIVES
Karen Houppert reinvents a Warhol "happening" in a new pop-rock musical, presented by Sightlines Theatre Company, which stars Juliana Francis as Valerie Solanas and T. Ryder Smith as Warhol. Directed by Stephen Nunns. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 212-868-4444. Closes Aug. 2.)

OUT OF TOWN

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
"All's Well That Ends Well" and "Antony and Cleopatra" play in rotating repertory at Boscobel Restoration. (Garrison, N.Y. 845-265-9575.)

TAMING OF THE SHREW: EXTREME
The Hamptons Shakespeare Festival presents a modern update of Shakespeare's marital comedy—skewed through the lens of TV reality shows. Directed by Craig George. (Theodore Roosevelt County Park, Route 27, three miles east of Montauk. For information, call 631-267-0105 or see www.hamptons-shakespeare.org.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 212-254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.

ENCHANTED APRIL
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

GYPSY
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. (Closes Aug. 3.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST
Baruch Performing Arts Center, 150 E. 25th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes Aug. 3.)

KIKI AND HERB: COUP DE THÉÂTRE
Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St., between Bedford and Hudson Sts. 212-239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

MAN OF LA MANCHA
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 212-921-8000.

SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 212-477-2477.

TAKE ME OUT
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.

TALKING HEADS
Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 212-307-1400.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

TWYLA THARP DANCE
In "Movin' Out," her hit Broadway dance show, Twyla Tharp uses the songs of Billy Joel to trace the fallout of the sixties in American culture; the program of her current season at the Joyce recalls her own artistic response to those times. Like most young dancemakers back then, Tharp was trying to strip dance to its essentials. Thus, there's no musical accompaniment for "The Fugue" (1970), just a dance phrase varied by strict rules. Yet unlike many of the era's experiments, it isn't academic. Tharp makes a game of the complexity—the dancers' footsteps are the music. In newer pieces, her inner flower child shows up in a lingering preoccupation with youth. The performers who horse around to Mark O'Connor's Coplandesque score for "Westerly Round" (2001) may look like kids, but they're dancers who can treat virtuoso steps as child's play. That's Tharp's magic, and it animates even the cryptic "Surfer at the River Styx" (2000)—a rave for ballet stars in the underworld with the loveliest self-dismemberment scene in modern dance. (175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. July 30-Aug. 1 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 2 and 8. Through Aug. 9.)

PRINTZ DANCE PROJECT
The San Francisco-based choreographer Stacey Printz delights in creating odd poses: a woman in a handstand makes her body arch like a scorpion's tail; a man in push-up position with one leg in arabesque provides a platform for a reclining woman. Her work also makes use of symbolic sets. In "L7," two groups of dancers separate into two Plexiglas boxes to represent prejudice; in "Lifeline," a stretch cord is used to depict the tension and elastic boundaries of relationships. Sometimes, though, she keeps things plain, by way of contrast. In her solo, "Inside Out," Printz simply kneels in a white dress and undulates to the gentle arpeggios of Charlie Hayden and Pat Metheney. The lovelorn figure she plays is familiar, but quirky gestures occasionally break through the cliché. The evening also includes "From These Mountains," set to Hawaiian slat-key guitar, and the world première of "Shift." (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. Aug. 1-3 at 8.)

GODDESSDANCE
Belly dance meets "Riverdance" in an evening that celebrates the myth and magic of the Middle East, past and present, with drums, didgeridoo, and *dumbek*; jingling, gauzy raiment; and original music, lyrics, and choreography by Jehan Kamal. (Theatre 3, at 311 W. 43rd St. 212-868-4444. Aug. 1 at 7:30 and 10:30, Aug. 2 at 3 and 8, and Aug. 4 at 8. Through Aug. 16.)

OUT OF TOWN

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY
The company made its first appearance at Jacob's Pillow in 1955—only two years after it was founded—and this week's performances in the Berkshires celebrate both the troupe's fiftieth anniversary and its long relationship with modern dance's rural HQ. The format is vintage Cunningham, an "event" in which excerpts from the repertory are mixed with fresh material, creating a new, continuous sequence. Like most of Cunningham's techniques, such as choreographing through chance procedures and combining music and sets with dance only in performance, this programming is designed to thwart habitual modes of dancemaking and dance-viewing, revealing continuities that might otherwise remain hidden. This time the ingredients include Mylar pillows by Andy Warhol, a set by the longtime Cunningham collaborator Robert Rauschenberg, and music performed live by Takehisa Kosugi and Andy Russ. (Ted Shawn Theatre, Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. July 30-Aug. 1 at 8, Aug. 2 at 2 and 8, and Aug. 3 at 2.)

JO STRØMGREN KOMPANI
A Norwegian physical-theatre group makes its United States début with an existential journey called "There." In a display of slapstick, augmented by old-time brass-band music and "serious" European theatre techniques, four men empty the contents of wooden crates onstage. When one of the boxes is revealed to contain the fourth player, the other three attempt to straighten him out, pulling at his legs and trunk, but to no avail—he stubbornly curls back up, a wise move. (Doris Duke Studio Theatre, Jacob's Pillow, Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. July 31-Aug. 1 at 8:15, Aug. 2 at 2:15 and 8:15, and Aug. 3 at 5.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

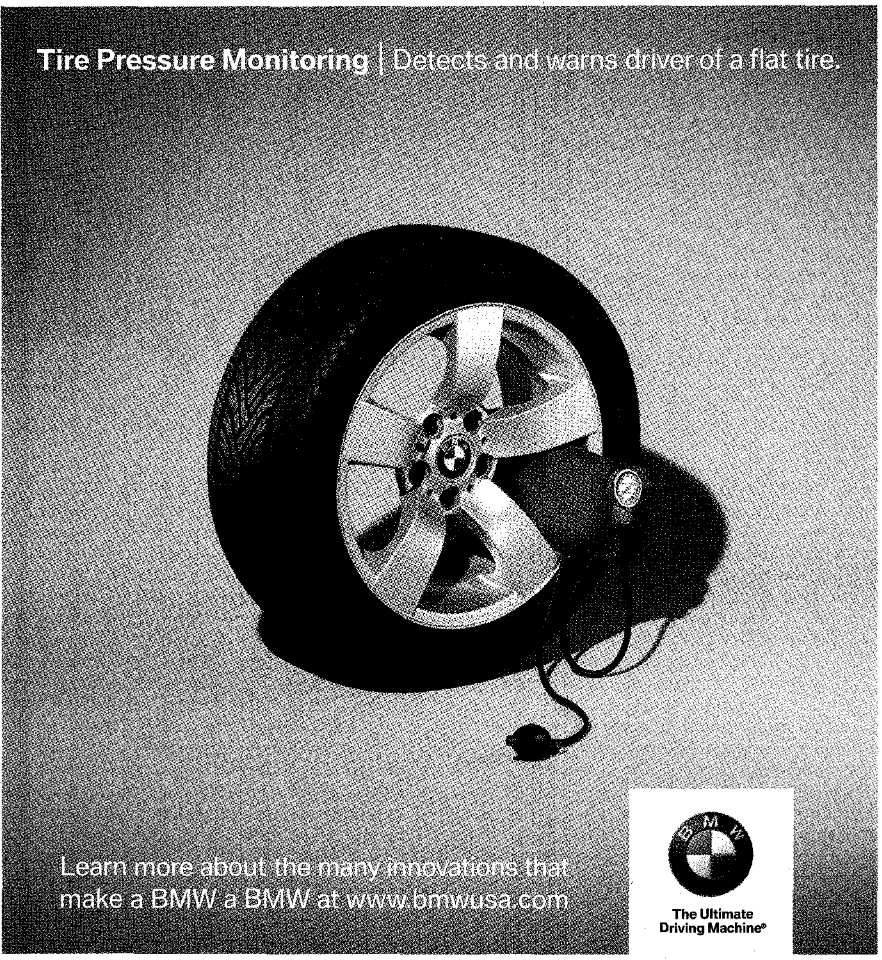
LOLLAPALOOZA
Having officially disbanded in 1991, at the peak of their powers, **Jane's Addiction** seemed poised to go down in history alongside such groundbreaking bands as the Clash and Led Zeppelin, yet their genre-splicing achievements were overshadowed that year by Nirvana. Few expected the band ever to record again, but that's precisely what they've done (albeit without the original bassist, Eric Avery). As odious as reunion albums tend to be, "Strays" recaptures more of the band's freakish glory than anyone had

TABLES FOR TWO

ZERZA
304 E. 6th St. (212-529-8250)—The block-letter sandwich board outside this Moroccan-themed restaurant proclaims "Casablanca Meets NYC," a note that's both sweet and desperate, like the yearbook caption for a high-school International Club. Zerza compensates for its new-kid outsider status (it's the only non-Indian palace on this East Village block) with a menu that's politically correct in the extreme—there's even a nod to Israeli cuisine in the form of spinach, feta, and pine-nut *bourekas* (the most popular appetizer). But the multicultural smorgasbord has its share of traditional Moroccan staples, too, including eight separate lamb dishes. There's lamb with artichoke and peas and lamb with apricots, prunes, and almonds. For Sunday brunch, there's spit-roasted lamb served with Moroccan pancakes. "Lamb is king!" explains the owner, Radouane ElJaouhari.

The atmosphere in this two-story night-life complex, despite its rich red walls and heavy incense smell, is less opium den than East Village genteel. Upstairs in Zerza's airy, minimalist dining quarter, with its wooden tables and banquette, nose-ringed Oberlin grads talking about Dean's chances in 2004 sit across from black-haired Eurasian beauties in halter dresses and their rich older husbands with tans and gold watches. Downstairs, the addictive dance music of Cheb Khaled and other Arabic artists plays over a scattering of wicker sofas, tile tables, and leather hassocks that seem designed to make you feel incredibly short unless they're piled on top of one another. In keeping with the "innocent decadence" theme, one of the house specialty cocktails, the Casablanca, tastes suspiciously like summer-camp bug juice but turns out to be composed of a near-lethal interplay of triple sec and rum. Considering the expanses of bare midriff on display this summer in the city, even Zerza's Saturday-night belly dancer, with her tastefully beaded belly and flowing cape, seems a little quaint. (Open daily for lunch and dinner and Sundays for brunch. Entrées $9.95-$14.95.)

—Lucinda Rosenfeld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any right to expect. Lollapalooza, front man Perry Farrell's pet project, has likewise been resuscitated, and the lineup now includes **Audioslave, Incubus, Queens of the Stone Age, Jurassic 5**, the **Donnas**, and many others. (Jones Beach Theatre. 212-307-7171. July 30 at 12:30.)

HUDSON RIVER FESTIVAL

July 31 at 7: **Del McCoury,** former lead singer of Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and current chair of one of the country's most electrifying bluegrass bands. (Castle Clinton, Battery Park. Free tickets, which are required, will be distributed at 5.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

July 31 at 7: **Tindersticks.** Something like a younger, hipper Anthony Newley, the Tindersticks' front man, Stuart Staples, is a black-clad boulevardier whose music is lush with weeping guitars and whispering drums. Staples ups the theatrics here by adding a full string orchestra. Aug. 2 at 3: The Mexican singer-songwriter sensation **Ely Guerra.** Aug. 3 at 7: Pilfering bits and pieces of glam rock and prefiguring the New Wave movement in the process, the eccentric outfit **Sparks** (comprised mainly of two brothers, Ron and Russell Mael) first concocted their charming blend of quirky art-pop in the early seventies. Two dozen albums later they have few recognizable hits, but they have earned a rabid cult following; this is their first New York City show in more than twenty years. With **Junior Senior,** a pair of disco-crazed Danes with opposing sexual orientations. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777.)

JOHN MELLENCAMP

The heartland rocker has moved from little pink houses to Delta roadhouses with his latest album, "Trouble No More," a collection of classic blues and folk tunes. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 212-307-7171. July 31 at 8.)

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!

Aug. 2 at 7:30: The Atlanta-based neo-soul singer **Donnie** has a voice that evokes the best of Stevie Wonder. Aug. 3 at 2: The riveting salsa singer **India** headlines a daylong festival of Puerto Rican culture. (Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. 718-855-7882, ext. 45.)

LEROY THOMAS

The lively Louisiana-based accordionist stops by with his band, the Zydeco Roadrunners. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, between 12th and 13th Sts. For more information, call 212-685-7597. Aug. 3 at 8, with a free dance lesson starting an hour earlier.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL

237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—Aug. 1-2: The legendary soul vocalist **Ray Charles.** Aug. 5: The synth-pop pioneers the **Human League.**

BOTTOM LINE

15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—July 30: **Peter Rowan,** a master of high lonesome who came of age in Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys and went on to record, with Jerry Garcia, Vassar Clements, and David Grisman, the legendary live bluegrass album "Old & In the Way." With the swinging string trio **Hot Club of Cowtown.**

BOWERY BALLROOM

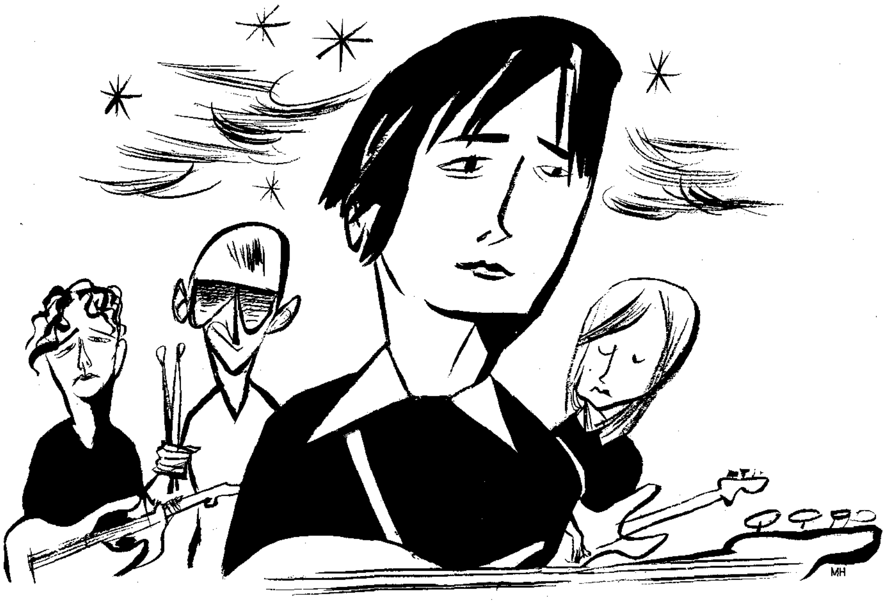
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—Aug. 1: With a resonant voice that would have met with much success in Manchester during the dawn of the Thatcher years, the singer and guitarist Shawn Christensen puts **Stellastarr*** in pretty rare company—its forthcoming self-titled major-label début is full of songs that could sit side by side on a post-punk compilation with the likes of Joy Division and the Cure. The group is fleshed out by the sweet backing vocals and driving bass lines of Amanda Tannen, the chiming guitar of Michael Jurin, and the steady drumming of Arthur Kremer. Aug. 2: Bill Callahan, who performs as (**Smog**), is a master of being alone in a crowd. Despite the folk-rock arrangements that enhance his songs, his sombre baritone voice stands on its own, and his eerie, insular lyrics often turn mordantly funny, as on "Dress Sexy at My Funeral." He's here tonight in support of his new album, his eleventh, "Supper." Aug. 5: The Grammy-winning rock *en español* act **Café Tacuba** takes its name from a small restaurant in its home town, Mexico City, but don't expect an evening of mariachi. Tacuba is certainly Latin, but the band is also fluent in funk, ska, and even old-fashioned punk.

IRVING PLAZA

17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—July 31: Led by Mark Oliver Everett (who calls himself E), the **Eels** have managed over the course of four DreamWorks albums—"Beautiful Freak" (1996), "Electro-Shock Blues" (1998), "Daisies of the Galaxy" (2000), and "Souljacker" (2001)—to create that rarest thing in contemporary pop: a unique sound. Everett, a cheerily demented depressive who favors titles like "Novocaine for the Soul" and who constructs tunes around shaggy bass lines and toy-piano frippery, offers a glimpse at what Brian Wilson might be doing had he been born in the seventies. E and company are in town with material from their brand-new release, "Shootenanny!," an album that devoted fans are already pegging as one of the Eels' best.

KNITTING FACTORY

74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—July 31: The **Billy Nayer Show** brings in its strange hybrid of performance art, cabaret, and alternative rock as it débuts songs from its new album, "Goodbye Straplight Sarentino, I Will Miss You," and screens "The American Astronaut," a feature-length space Western made by the band's charismatic front man, Cory McAbee.



The local quartet Stellastarr headlines at the Bowery Ballroom on Aug. 1.*

MERCURY LOUNGE

217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700)—July 30: Messy, reverb-driven space rock from the Boise, Idaho, ensemble **Caustic Resin.** The opener is the **Singapore Sling.** Hailing from Reykjavík, Iceland, this guitar-infatuated gang oscillates between catchy melodic pop and inescapable feedback-heavy assaults. Unlike some of their more noted (and more serious) countrymen, these boys have no fear of rock and roll—their début album, "The Curse of Singapore Sling," includes a drawn-and-quartered cover of the garage-rock classic "Dirty Water." Aug. 1: By using a cello and the mixing board instead of the standard guitar-and-keyboard new-band setup, the Bay Area transplants **Out Hud** create layered, distortion-heavy instrumentals with one common denominator—they're universally danceable. Sample song title: "The L Train is a Swell Train and I Don't Want to Hear You Indies Complain." Aug. 2: **Steve Wynn,** a celebrated veteran of the neo-psychedelic Paisley Underground scene, followed his early-eighties stint as the lead singer of the Dream Syndicate with a comparatively quiet solo career as a singer-songwriter. His latest record, "Static Transmission," however, is a rollicking return to form.

S.O.B.'S

204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (212-243-4940)—July 30: Led by the brothers Jean and Richard Shepherd, New York City's **Radio Mundial** (World Radio) fuses Latin rhythms, funk, soul, and reggae into a soundtrack for summer nights of dancing around your local stoop. Dining.

TOBACCO ROAD

355 W. 41st St. (212-244-7623)—Aug. 2: The **Hackensaw Boys,** an octet from Charlottesville, Virginia, is known for tearing apart mountain music with revved-up flair.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND

315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—July 30: **Barbara Carroll's** authentic bebop piano (when she was young, she drew attention on Fifty-second Street, where the likes of Charlie Parker would sit in with her), subtle vocalizing, and encyclopedic knowledge of standards make for a civilizing night out. July 31-Aug. 2: The **Masters of Groove** have the credentials to back up the bravado of their name: Reuben Wilson is an old-school practitioner of the Hammond organ, the legendary Bernard (Pretty) Purdie may have more hit records to his credit than any other session drummer, and the guitarist, Grant Green, Jr., has the groove in his genes thanks to his fretman father, Grant Green. Dining.

BLUE NOTE

131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through Aug. 3: Even the best work of the Brazilian songsmith **Ivan Lins** can't make you forget Antonio Carlos Jobim, but Lins's pleasant way with suggestive harmonies and buoyant rhythms cuts through the slickness of his pop-fusion presentation. Aug. 4: The **Howard Fishman** quartet. The self-taught guitarist and gravelly-voiced singer Fishman, a Connecticut native who spent his musically formative years in New Orleans, makes music that defies easy characterization. With his violinist, Russell Farhang, he channels the hot jazz of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli. More recently, however, Fishman added a drummer to the group in the service of his nascent passion for contemporary rock.

IRIDIUM

1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—You can't keep a good man down, and **Clark Terry** (here with his quintet through Aug. 3) is as good as they come. The vicissitudes of age haven't encumbered this octogenarian brassman—a master of

MARCELLUS HALL

swing-to-bop trumpet and flugelhorn—and former Ellington star soloist from doing what he does best: mixing first-rate jazz with laugh-out-loud entertainment. The formidable trombonist **Slide Hampton** will also be on hand. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—Aug. 1-2: The **Jason Lindner Group.** You get the whole deal with the pianist Lindner: inventive, wide-ranging playing, pointed composing, and bandleading that exhibits vision rather than obedience to tradition. He's making great strides year by year—keep an eye on him.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—July 31-Aug. 2: The **Javon Jackson** quintet. What happens when a lauded young lion of the nineties isn't so young anymore and the critical hoopla dies down? In the saxophonist Jackson's case, the answer is to continue making honest music with imagination and brio that calls on as many resources as possible while still honoring the hard-bop tradition. Dining.

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—Aug. 1-2: The **Bruce Barth** trio. Barth, who first garnered attention in the neo-con finishing school of Terence Blanchard's band, is a sharp young pianist who speaks in a fluent sixties dialect. Sundays: The **Frank & Joe Show.** Frank Vignola plays guitar and Joe Ascione plays the drums, and between them they know more swing-era tunes than a busload of retirees.

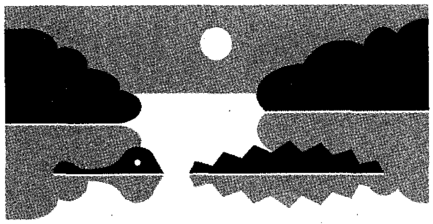
TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—Aug. 1: You want trumpets, you'll get trumpets when **Butch Morris** hosts a "conduction," his improvised orchestrations in real time. This go-round features such sterling horn players as **Dave Douglas, Roy Campbell, Ingrid Jensen, Steven Bernstein,** and **Dave Ballou.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through Aug. 3: Few pianists have more jazz history at their fingertips than **Marcus Roberts,** who can summon up echoes of Jelly Roll Morton as easily as those of Herbie Hancock. Still, he's no slave to the past. With his responsive trio, Roberts flings about rhythms and harmony in extravagant fashion, answering to his own muse alone. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—Viewers who didn't get enough Manet with their Velázquez can take solace in several seascapes inspired by an American Civil War battle waged off the coast of France. (Before becoming a painter, Manet sailed to Brazil on a cargo ship; he enrolled in art school after twice failing the Naval Academy entrance exam.) On June 19, 1864, the Confederacy's most successful raider, the C.S.S. Alabama, was sunk two hours after it launched a sneak attack on the U.S.S. Kearsarge. Manet painted the battle from imagination (abetted by news reports), then travelled to Boulogne-sur-Mer to paint a portrait of the victorious ship anchored there. Also on view are works by Whistler, Courbet, and Monet (all inspired by Manet), not to mention the captain's log and an elaborate model of the Kearsarge. Through Aug. 17. ♦ **"Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus."** Through Aug. 17. ♦ After witnessing the atrocities of the First World War as a medic, the German painter Max Beckmann took up Expressionism to "reproach God for his errors." The museum recently acquired the famous "Hell" portfolio, eleven black-and-white lithographs that chronicle Beckmann's visit to Berlin in 1919 during the March Rebellion, when twelve hundred people were killed in two days. The original owner of the portfolio, the industrialist Hugo Stinnes, appears in a stinging caricature as a puppeteer dan-

BOOK CURRENTS
Great Barriers

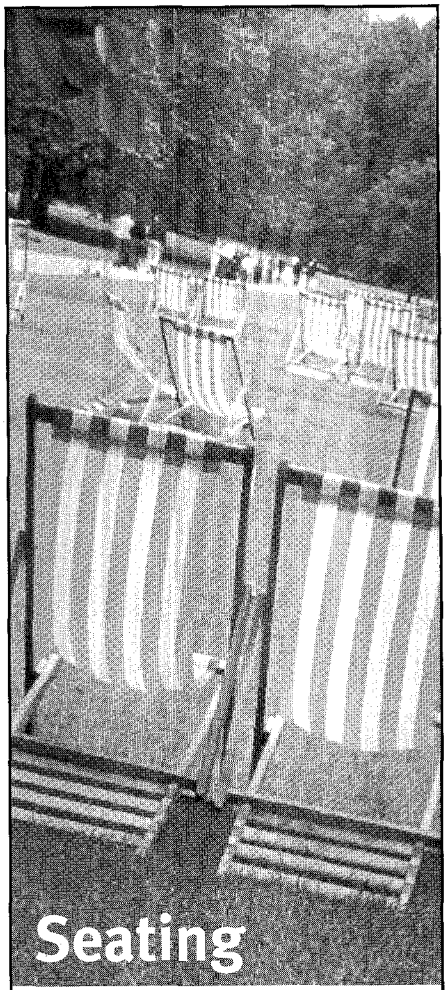


STEPHEN SAVAGE

After the Great Mississippi Flood, in 1927, which cost more than a thousand lives and a billion dollars in damages, a massive network of levees was constructed to tame the river's turbulent flow. The river had been constantly shifting to find the shortest distance to the ocean, thereby depositing a fan of rich sediment into the Gulf of Mexico. As Mike Tidwell reports in **BAYOU FAREWELL** (Pantheon), these levees, along with other man-made intrusions, have accelerated erosion in the Delta. "The whole ragged sole of the Louisiana boot, an area the size of Connecticut—three million acres—is literally washing out to sea," Tidwell writes. As the marshland recedes, a distinct regional culture is going with it. On the Cajun bayou, Tidwell fishes near sunken cemeteries and hitches a ride with a shrimp-boat captain who steers the wheel with his toes. By airplane, Tidwell observes the death by drowning of some of the region's barrier islands, which serve equally as avian habitats and buffers for hurricanes.

The marine geologist Orrin H. Pilkey extols the value of barrier islands in the Louisiana Delta, but questions the cost of preservation, asserting that attempts to slow the natural "rolling over" of such islands are futile. "Very large amounts of money will be expended to hold the line in the mud," he writes in **A CELEBRATION OF THE WORLD'S BARRIER ISLANDS** (Columbia). Delicate renderings of the islands by artist Mary Edna Fraser look like vivid aerial-view paintings but are actually batik prints of the coasts, counterbalancing Pilkey's careful study of the "restless ribbons of sand." Citing the inland transplant of lighthouses, as at Cape Hatteras, Pilkey urges beach lovers not to demand permanency: "The barrier islands of the world are telling us that they need to be free to survive."

—*Lauren Porcaro*



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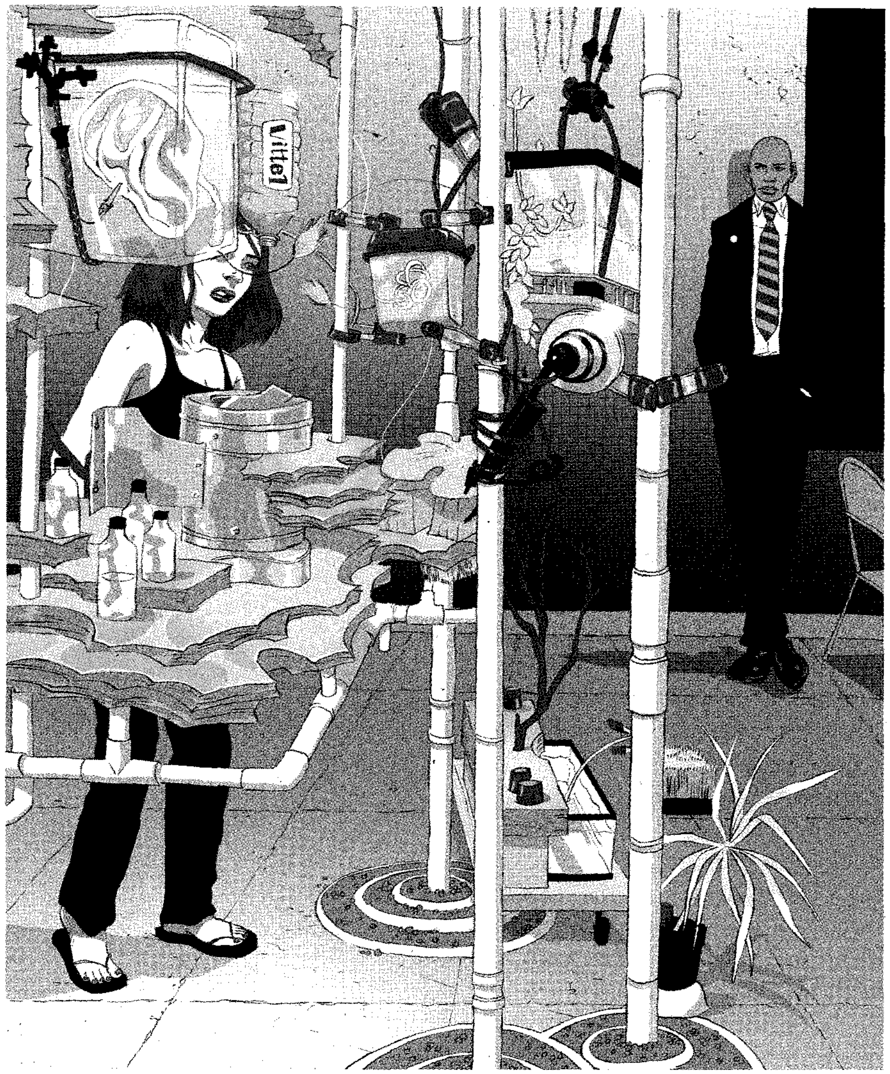


Sarah Sze's installation "The Triple Point of Water," at the Whitney.

gling a marionette emperor, surrounded by human skulls and sacks of cash. This series' masterly balance between chaotic and carnivalesque is an amuse-bouche for the retrospective of the artist currently at MOMA QNS. Through Aug. 31. ♦ A playful roof-garden sculpture—a painted aluminum cottage with a red roof, white and yellow walls, and a blue chimney—by Roy Lichtenstein, the late Pop artist, sits on its own little lawn with a sign warning viewers to keep off the grass. Through Nov. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)

33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Ansel Adams at 100"** is a retrospective of the mountain man, whose exquisitely made, self-conscious photographs of spectacular Western scenery are a hard case in modern art. In form, Adams was impeccably modernist, and had a command of photographic aesthetics as thoroughgoing, within its narrower range, as Edward Weston's. In feeling, Adams was a populist romantic, retreading sentimental conventions of God's country. To enjoy his imperious mastery and his swooning piety equally does not seem possible; they trip each other up. And the hanging of the smallish prints in the warehouse space of MOMA QNS is a blunder—the show looks dwarfed and dismal. Through Nov. 3. ♦ This succinct retrospective tests Max Beckmann's long-pending claim to parity with the modern masters of Paris. The curator Robert Storr's trenchant selection and airy hanging make a winning case. How does one look at art that is laden with elusive, often quite lugubrious portent? The show's answer: as painting. Beckmann's manipulations of aggressive, theatrical space are dazzlingly supple. The trick, for the viewer, is to receive the pictures passively, letting their organization declare itself. Even, or especially, when its imagery is gnarled and bizarre, a great Beckmann attains startling unity, notably through making light-dark modelling inseparable from warm-cool color. Depth and surface become one. Beckmann does all the work: our role is to be bowled over. Through Sept. 29. ♦ **"Andy Warhol: Screen Tests,"** twenty-eight selections from the artist's series of portraits on film—lingering 16-mm. shots of various subjects. Through Sept. 1. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism"** is a concise, bewitching show of paintings, drawings, and sculptures—many of them making their first trip outside Russia. Through Sept. 7. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—In **"The American Effect,"** forty-seven artists and filmmakers react to the myths and policies of the United States. Through Oct. 12. ♦ For sheer joy in materials, no one can compete with Sarah Sze. Binder clips, bright blue Windex bottles, fake grass, PVC pipe, drinking straws, orange string—put it all together in the Whitney's moatlike sunken courtyard and you've got **"The Triple Point of Water."** This refers to the solid, liquid, and gaseous states of H_2O, and it's an ethereal title, but the elaborate installation is a marvel, a delicate, multilevel habitat, a miniature city or ecosystem animated by little fans and burbling aquariums. Through Oct. 9. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—The Academy's début exhibition, in 1826, included women, which was remarkably advanced for the era. Shortly thereafter, its schools added members of the fairer sex to the student rolls and elected women as academicians. More than a hundred items from the museum's collection of the paintings, sculptures, and works on paper made by these students and members are on view in **"Challenging Tradition: Women of the Academy, 1826-2003,"** with examples ranging from Mary Cassatt to Helen Frankenthaler and Maya Lin. Unfortunately, the tang of innovation seems to have worn off—the gracious, wainscotted rooms are filled with a conspicuously well-bred group of portraits, landscapes, and geometric abstractions. The Academy's founding fathers could drink tea beside this art without a qualm. Through Jan. 4. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

583 Broadway (212-219-1222)—The boisterous and ambitious **"Black President"** show pays tribute to the late Fela Anikulapo-Kuti (1938-97), a visionary Nigerian musician (pioneer of the Afrobeat sound), ladies' man (husband to twenty-eight wives), and activist (self-appointed "black president"). Some artists riff on Fela's black-power politics (Klaus Bürgel and Kara Walker sardonically re-create tools of bondage used in slavery in twenty-two-karat-gold miniature). Others wryly comment on his attitudes toward women (Yinka Shonibare fills a platform stage with brightly clad but headless female figures). Near the start of the show, Barkley Hendricks sums up Fela's complex character in a portrait of the artist as a haloed saint, with a microphone in one hand and his crotch in the other. The legacy of this controversial genius overshadows the impact (both collective and individual) of the art work, but the show is a must-see nonetheless. Through Sept. 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—Tony Edgecombe's **"Lightwing"** won P.S. 1's young-architect competition to become this year's "urban beach," an annual installation in the onetime school's erstwhile playground. It is modest at ground level—a few long, low wading pools surrounded by ramped plywood seating painted industrial gray—but the wire-mesh awning from which the piece takes its name stretches across the courtyard expanse, looking like Wonder Woman's plane landing. When it's illuminated, "Lightwing" serves as a giant moon, a huge piece of moth bait hovering over Warm Up, the music festival that fills the courtyard and the museum by midafternoon on summer weekends. Warm Up is in its sixth year, so museumgoers have learned to splash past the signs, posted in compliance with one or another legal or insurance regulation, reading, "Please do not swim or wade in the pool, the pools are intended for reflective purposes only." Through Aug. 30. ♦ The incidence of U.F.O. reports may have just skyrocketed in Queens, thanks to Leo Villareal's installation "Supercluster," a grid of six hundred and forty L.E.D.s that flash a complex sequence along the outside of the museum after dark. (Daytime viewers can watch a videotape of the piece inside the museum.) It's part of **"Signatures of the Invisible,"** an exhibition of collaborations between artists and scientists from CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire), the world's largest particle-physics center, based in Geneva, Switzerland. But aside from Villareal's, the works in the show—a lilac meditation room with a projection of musing physicists by Sylvie Blocher, a trompe-l'oeil painting by Patrick Hughes—pale in comparison to the scientific equipment on view, magical instruments like the particle-detector drift chamber or the cosmic-ray counter. Through Aug. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

TOMER HANUKA

GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Summer-hours warning: many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

"GIVERNY"
At first glance little connects the fifteen American artists in this show except the fact that each spent a summer working in Monet's garden at Giverny. Despite the occasional low point (the nadir is Will Cotton's insipid painting of a landscape made of flan), there are plenty of revelations. Miranda Lichtenstein's large-scale photograph of leaves against a twilight sky mimics the garden by turning landscape to still-life and nature to artifice. Freshest of all are Rachel Urkowitz's acrylic flowers, a sculptural riff on Monet's water lilies by way of Jeff Koons's inflatable blossoms. Through Aug. 13. (Salon 94, 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212.)

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

VICTORIA GOTTI
In the peaceful alternative universe depicted here, no long-legged woman lacks for a coy, coöperative animal companion, whether lapdog or leashed lion. Gotti, who signs her paintings "V. Gotti Sr." to distinguish herself from her daughter, the columnist and romance novelist of the same name, veers, in the family style, into NC-17 territory here via full nudity in mixed company. Her gallerist has gone on record comparing her rough style, which lies somewhere between fashion illustration and folk art, to Manet's and Cézanne's. Through Aug. 22. (Gale-Martin, 134 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 646-638-2525.)

"GROUP SHOW"
The five artists in this ingenious exhibition share an alchemical m.o., transforming what Kurt Schwitters called the "spoils and relics" of everyday life into art. Back in 1969, the Swiss artist Dieter Roth (1930-98) coated a paper ziggurat with chocolate, yogurt, and fruit juice, now ossified into a cryptic talisman. Rachel Harrison also plays with her food; she's at her slapstick-formal best tucking a package of cookies inside a cutaway box housing DVD imagery of dazed clubgoers at a vending machine. But the star of the show is the cult filmmaker Jack Smith (1932-89). His mixed-media costumes—a man-size lobster, tin-can brassieres—have a gender-bending, madcap zeal that presages the work of young artists from Assume Vivid Astro Focus to Forcefield. Through Aug. 15. (Matthew Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 212-243-0200.)

"NOW PLAYING"
Working on the "and those two told two more" paradigm, D'Amelio Terras has invited three smaller, younger exhibitors (the Daniel Reich Gallery, a space called John Connelly Presents, and K48, a producer of artists' performances and digital media) to cram their respective wares into the gallery. The result, perhaps predictably, may look like an art-student version of an end-of-season sale, but there are some arresting pieces, notably Paul P's red-nosed Pierrot paintings and a dorky but appealing science-project installation, by Delia Gonzalez and Gavin Russom, which comes with a painstakingly handwritten rationale in a ring binder. Through Aug. 8. (525 W. 22nd St. 212-352-9460.)

"ONLINE"
A good show with a dumb name, "Online" is a sprawling yet cohesive and instructive survey of contemporary drawing, which unfolds here as a spectrum of things feisty, ingenious, and meditative. Curated by man-about-town Charlie Finch (whose book is called "Most Art Sucks") with the Drawing Center's George Negroponte and Robert Storr (formerly of MOMA), the thirty-eight-person show contains almost no duds—standouts include wall drawings by Mary Temple and David Brody, a burned-paper filigree by Charles Spurrier, Su-En Wong's multiple self-portraits, Beth Campbell's diaristic maps, and Daniel Zeller's obsessive quasi-cartography. Through Aug. 9. (Feigen, 535 W. 20th St. 212-929-0500.)

GALLERIES-SOHO

CLEMENS WEISS
If prophets doodled on their morning papers, it might look like these drawings. Angels, erupting volcanoes, alligators, and comets swirl through miasmas of hot orange and red, sometimes affixed directly to newspaper, sometimes simply nodding to newspapers as a source (some works include words such as "possibly" and "enjoy" in *Times* typeface). The works are framed in heavy glass crisscrossed with seams of glue; there are also crystallographic glass-and-glue steles and shelving units. A Blakean grandeur is implied, but on the whole, as one partially obscured headline puts it, the work is about "big visions unfulfilled." Through Aug. 1. (Ronald Feldman, 31 Mercer St. 212-226-3232.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

ANSEL ADAMS
In conjunction with MOMA QNS's "Ansel Adams at 100" show, the Adams scholar Andrea Stillman presents the slightly more accurate "100 + 1"—both shows are meant to mark the centenary of the photographer, who was born in 1902. Stillman includes early work, Adams's first portfolio, and his only series ("Surf Sequence"), as well as such masterworks as "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico, 1941" and "Clearing Winter Storm, Yosemite, 1944." Through Aug. 22. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St. 212-989-7600.)

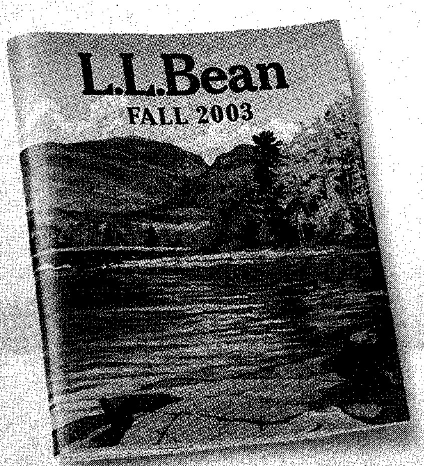
JEAN-LUC MYLAYNE
The gently obsessive Frenchman points his camera at some lovely patch of the outdoors—a field, a garden, part of a house—and waits for a bird, any bird, to appear in it. The bird's arrival makes the picture. Mylayne's big color prints call attention to the frame as a proscenium for little feathery dramas. Tilted focal planes produce odd zones of focus, affirming that a camera, not an eye, is doing the looking. The birds are sometimes hard to see—a tiny shape in a thicket, a blur of flight. This tranquil, meditative work, which took great patience to create, imparts patience, too. Through Aug. 15. (Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 212-206-9300.)

TOMOKO SAWADA
Sawada's witty and buoyant show—the young Japanese photographer's first in America—is at once highly allusive and wonderfully inspired. The first half, "Omiai" (referring to the Japanese tradition in which young men and women have photos of themselves taken and shown to their prospective mates for arranged marriages), is a series of photography-studio portraits starring Sawada dressed in different costumes—gaudy, gold-threaded, exaggeratedly formal kimonos in some, plain, proper business suits in others—while grinning enthusiastically for the camera. In the second series, Sawada has assembled different photo-booth strips of herself—transformed, with complex hairdos and makeup, into Japanese schoolgirls, surly drag queens, whacked-out housewives, sullen children, and tentative adolescents—into large black-and-white grids. It's impossible to look at any of Sawada's photographs and not feel the presence of a whole host of her predecessors (Andy Warhol, Cindy Sherman, and Nikki Lee), yet they don't feel derivative. The whole thing, from conceit to execution, is so bouncy, outlandish, and unexpected that it's difficult to look away. Through Sept. 6. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St. 212-752-1223.)

Short List

RUTH BERNHARD / IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM
Stevenson, 338 W. 23rd St. 212-352-0070.
Through Aug. 16.

"THE BOYS OF SUMMER"
ClampArt, 531 W. 25th St. 646-230-0020.
Through Sept. 6.



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CLASSICAL MUSIC CONCERTS IN TOWN

NEW YORK GRAND OPERA: "LA BOHÈME"
No, not *that* "La Bohème," but the version by Ruggero Leoncavallo (the man who composed "Pagliacci"), who wrote his opera in direct competition with Puccini, his former collaborator. Puccini's was produced first, in 1896, and has gone on to conquer the world, but Leoncavallo's treatment, which adheres more closely to Murger's novel, has managed to hold on in Italian houses. Vincent La Selva, devoted friend to half-forgotten verist operas, conducts a staged performance of the piece in Central Park's East Meadow—provided the elements, and the company's less-than-perfect sound system, comply. (July 30 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

BARGEMUSIC
Chamber Domaine, from London, is an ensemble on a mission: to revive obscure treasures from major twentieth-century British composers and pair them with works by such contemporary talents as Thomas Adès and Judith Weir. July 31 at 7:30: The world première of Judith Bingham's "The Moon Over Westminster Cathedral" is the highlight of a concert that also features music by Elgar and Walton (the Piano Quartet). ♦ Aug. 1 at 7:30: Elgar's rarely heard String Quartet in E Minor is matched with works by Bliss and Weir. ♦ Aug. 2 at 7:30: An evening of mainly vocal works by Adès (a setting of Tennessee Williams's louche poem "Life Story"), Elgar, and Bridge. ♦ Aug. 3 at 4: Two American premières by the twenty-seven-year-old Scottish prodigy Stuart MacRae are intertwined with two meditative masterpieces, Britten's "Lachrymae" and Elgar's Piano Quintet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL
July 31 and Aug. 2 at 8: Two final performances of "Winterreise," a dance treatment of Schubert's song cycle (conceived by Trisha Brown) that features the musical and dramatic contributions of the baritone Simon Keenlyside. (John Jay College Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St.) ♦ July 31 at 8: The Emerson String Quartet teams up with the pianist Jeffrey Kahane for a concert of Mozart, Schubert (the Quartet in A Minor, D. 804), and Brahms (the Piano Quintet). (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 1-2 at 8: Stephen Hough, a pianist with a mellifluous style and a light touch, is the soloist in works by Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major) and Weber in a program with Louis Langrée and the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, who also offer Mozart's Symphonies Nos. 25 (the "Little G Minor," the composer's contribution to the Sturm und Drang movement) and 35 (the "Haffner"). (Avery Fisher Hall.) ♦ Aug. 3 at 5: In the first program of a miniature, two-concert "Beethoven Experience," Roger Norrington will conduct the Camerata Salzburg (which he serves as chief conductor) in the ballet music for "The Creatures of Prometheus" and the Symphony No. 3, "Eroica." (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ Aug. 4 at 8: Norrington, with the soprano Dominique Labelle and the narrator Hannes Eichmann, returns to conduct the complete incidental music for "Egmont" and the Fifth Symphony. (Alice Tully Hall.) ♦ Aug. 5-6 at 8: Piotr Anderszewski joins the conductor John Nelson and the festival orchestra in Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, a piece he plays with uncommon intelligence and sensitivity. Works by Schnittke and Mendelssohn (the "Italian" Symphony) round out the program. (Avery Fisher Hall.) (For tickets to all performances, call 212-721-6500.)

CLASSICAL NOTES

SONGS OF LOVE AND WAR
Italians don't only write operas: their country has a long tradition of producing composers who bring theatrical savvy and lavish lyricism to a variety of musical forms. The recent reissue on Deutsche Grammophon of Luciano Berio's 1980 recording of his **"Coro,"** featuring the superb chorus and orchestra of Cologne Radio, might seem gloomily timed, given Berio's death, this May. But the concurrent appearance of a new recording of another masterwork—Monteverdi's **"Madrigali Guerrieri ed Amorosi,"** of 1638, brought vividly to life by René Jacobs and Concerto Vocale on Harmonia Mundi—makes it clear that both composers, despite their obvious differences, sprang from the same roots.

Monteverdi's aim in the "Madrigali" was to develop a *concitato* ("agitated") style to complement the more emotionally temperate styles of his Renaissance forebears. The twenty-six pieces divide into two sections, the first comparing the struggles of the heart to those of war—never more gruesomely than in the renowned setting of Tasso's "Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda," a furious mini-opera in which two knights, male and female, fight bloodily with broadswords before their fatal warfare is redeemed in Christian love and mercy. The smooth and capacious baritone of Victor Torres, as the Narrator, ties the passions of that tale together; Bernarda Fink, a mezzo-soprano whose tone and temperament recall the singing of Janet Baker, is the star in the "Lamento della Ninfa" (from the concluding volume of madrigals), a supreme example of the mournful Baroque chaconne.

Berio, writing more than three centuries later, wanted to inject some human warmth and gesture into the dry and dogmatic aesthetics of the postwar avant-garde—which in "Coro" results in a style combining moments of shimmering, complex beauty with sections of rugged atonality far more *concitato* than his predecessor could have imagined. Settings of folk poetry from America, Africa, and Europe are sung by soloists from the choir, each matched with an instrumentalist; they meet as one in epic settings of fragments of a poem by Pablo Neruda, like Berio a highly sensual artist who was also politically engaged. It is a breathtaking vision, at once consoling and bleak, in which humanity, surrounded by the detritus of its own destruction, can only find redemption in itself.

—*Russell Platt*

OUT OF TOWN

BRIDGEHAMPTON CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
After the Music Festival of the Hamptons closes shop, East End music lovers can proceed directly to this three-week series, directed by the flutist Marya Martin, where an intimate atmosphere is sustained by a faithful group of returning musicians. The festival turns twenty this year; to celebrate, the concerts will feature the world premières of three commissioned works. July 30 at 7: A free outdoor Vivaldi concert, including "The Four Seasons." ♦ Aug. 3 at 6:30: "Fiddlefest," a concert featuring the première of the country-classical fiddler Mark O'Connor's "Piece for Flute and String Quartet" along with works by Bach, Bartók, and Mendelssohn (the Piano Trio No. 2 in C Minor). O'Connor himself will be on hand, joining such colleagues as the violinist Ani Kavafian and the pianist André-Michel Schub. (Bridgehampton, N.Y. 631-537-3507.)

BARD SUMMERSCAPE
Leon Botstein's ambitious festival goes digital in **"Don Juan in Prague,"** an adaptation of "Don Giovanni" courtesy of the New Zealand composer Matthew Suttor and the director David Chambers. Suttor's past work has combined video with sounds made by objects like a wooden flute, a wineglass, and a spaghetti pot; here, he uses computers to rearrange Mozart's score. The string quartet Ethel accompanies a cast that includes the noted Czech violinist and vocal contortionist Iva Bittová in the role of Donna Elvira. The venue for this techno remake could hardly be better: Bard's new Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, which was designed by Frank Gehry and employs the curvaceous metal surfaces that have made him famous. (July 30-31 at 8, Aug. 2 at 4, and Aug. 3 at 2.) ♦ The final performances of Janáček's semi-autobiographical opera **"Osud"** ("Fate"), with Christine Abraham, Linda Roark-Strummer, and Michael Hendrick leading the cast; Botstein conducts the American Symphony Orchestra. (Aug. 1-2 at 8.) (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7412.)

TANGLEWOOD
July 30 at 8:30: Jeffrey Kahane joins with the Emerson String Quartet for a concert of Smetana, Janáček, and Brahms (the Piano Quintet). ♦ July 31 at 8:30: Piotr Anderszewski brings his considerable keyboard talents to a recital of Bach and Beethoven (the "Diabelli" Variations). ♦ Aug. 1 at 8:30: Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in what promises to be a colorful account of Verdi's Requiem; his soloists include two young Metropolitan Opera standouts, the soprano Sondra Radvanovsky and the bass-baritone John Relyea. ♦ Aug. 3 at 2:30: The conductor Christoph von Dohnányi and the pianist Emanuel Ax, two artists of great refinement and insight, have been a winning team for some time; they collaborate in a B.S.O. concert of Brahms (the First Piano Concerto) and Dvořák (the "New World" Symphony). ♦ Aug. 3 at 8:30: Yo-Yo Ma, whose recent enthusiasms have taken him to Asia and Appalachia, now turns his attention to the sultry sounds of Brazil; he teams up with such musicians as the clarinettist Paquito D'Rivera and the guitarists Sergio and Odair Assad for an evening of bossa nova, samba, and the classical music of Villa-Lobos. ♦ Aug. 5 at 8:30: The annual "Tanglewood on Parade," an evening with the B.S.O., the Boston Pops, and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra performing under the batons of Edo de Waart, Charles Dutoit, Keith Lockhart, and John Williams. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
July 31 at 6: In one of the festival's "Introductions" concerts, the violinist Yura Lee (with the pianist Damian Girvin) offers works by Pärt, Brahms (the Violin Sonata in D Minor), and Ravel. ♦ Aug. 1 at 8: The Rossetti String Quartet, an elegant, smart, and appealing young foursome, play music by Haydn, Ravel, and John Harbison (the Fourth Quartet, which they co-commissioned). ♦ Aug. 2 at 1: Joe Lovano, the artistic director for this season's Caramoor Jazz Festival, moves his forces back to the Venetian Theatre for the final all-day concert featuring the Bill Charlap and John Pizzarelli trios, among others. ♦ Aug. 3 at 4:30: With the recent additions of a new first violinist, Martin Beaver, and a new cellist, Clive Greensmith, the Tokyo String Quartet—always admired for its technical perfection and carefully thought-out performances—now revels in a newfound warmth and gorgeously blended sound. For their Caramoor program they offer music by Beethoven, Debussy, and Zemlinsky (the seldom heard Fourth Quartet). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA
July 31 at 8 and Aug. 2 at 1:30: Offenbach's **"Bluebeard,"** with Tracey Welborn, Phyllis Pancella, and Anthony Laciura; Gerald Steichen conducts. ♦ Aug. 1 at 8 and Aug. 5 at 2: Robert Kurka's **"The Good Soldier Schweik,"** a snazzy two-act opera based on the classic comic novel of the First World War by Jaroslav Hašek. Rhoda Levine's new production features a cast led by Anthony Dean Griffey; Stewart Robertson. ♦ Aug. 2 at 8 and Aug. 4 at 2: **"Don Giovanni,"** with Palle Knudsen, Maria Kanyova, Amy Burton, Kyle Ketelsen, and John McVeigh; Robertson. ♦ Aug. 3 at 2: Much of Chas Rader-Shieber's production of Handel's **"Orlando"** (which has a libretto loosely based on Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso") revels in the kind of goofy stage business that

plagues all too many productions of the composer's operas—until the end, when the triumph of war over love is brought home with devastating force. The director is part of a nearly ideal creative team, featuring contributions by, among others, the superb sopranos Christine Brandes and Joyce Guyer; the countertenor Bejun Mehta (in the title role), who makes up for his less than ravishing tone with his incisive understanding of character; and the conductor Bernard Labadie, one of those rare maestros who understand that melodies are made of phrases, not just notes. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
The Tokyo String Quartet, much in demand this summer, offers two concerts with the pianist Melvin Chen. Aug. 1 at 8: The players break up and reform for duos and trios by Mozart, Dohnányi, and Brahms (the Violin Sonata in D Minor). ♦ Aug. 2 at 8: "Vienna 1890," a program of quartets by Webern, Debussy, Wolf, and Strauss (the Piano Quartet in E-Flat Major). (Routes 44 and 272, Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3004.)

PIANOSUMMER AT NEW PALTZ
Vladimir Feltsman's piano festival and institute comes to a close with a gala concert featuring the winner of the Jacob Flier Competition, who will solo in a piano concerto with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic. Music by Tchaikovsky and Shostakovich rounds out the program; Feltsman conducts. (McKenna Theatre, State University of New York at New Paltz. 845-257-3904. Aug. 1 at 8.)

ASTON MAGNA FESTIVAL
The renowned early-music collective celebrates three decades in the Berkshires with a gala concert of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos, led from the concertmaster's chair by Daniel Stepner. (St. James Church, Route 7, Great Barrington, Mass. 413-528-3595. Aug. 2 at 5:30.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS
Aug. 2 at 8: The violinist Livia Sohn and the cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach offer their interpretations of three masterworks of the duo repertory—by Halvorsen, Kodály, and Ravel—along with a piece by a newer contender, Daron Hagen (his "Duo," from 1997). ♦ Aug. 3 at 3: More Ravel, this time from the Rossetti String Quartet, who play his lone Quartet along with music by Haydn and Schumann. (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
Spain's Casals String Quartet, with the pianist Pamela Mia Paul, settles in for the weekend. Aug. 2 at 8: Music by Turina, Mozart, Brahms, and Fauré (the Piano Quartet in C Minor). ♦ Aug. 3 at 3: Schumann's Piano Quartet, along with works by Mozart, Haydn, and Webern. (Routes 63 and 126, Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

MARLBORO FESTIVAL
The festival, chamber music's holiest shrine, continues its series of performances by some of the world's leading artists and their very talented students. Programs are available one week before each concert at www.marlboromusic.org. (Marlboro, Vt. 802-254-2394. Aug. 2 at 8:30 and Aug. 3 at 2:30.)

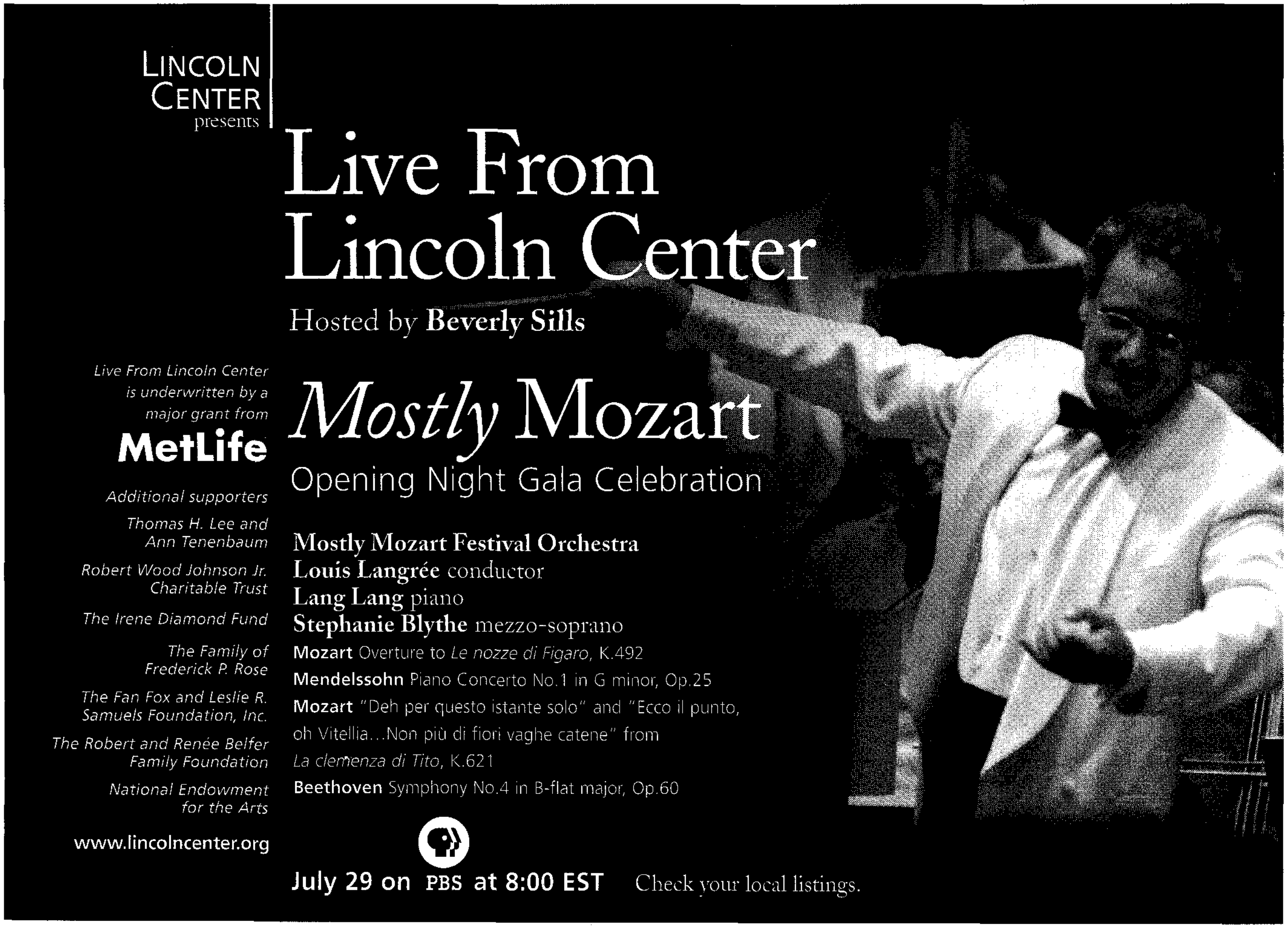
ABOVE AND BEYOND

"GOTHAM FISH TALES"
Back in 1996, when Robert Maass, a former photographer for *Newsweek*, was on assignment for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to shoot waterfront sewage-treatment plants, he noticed a curious detail—the plants' employees often spent their lunch hours down at the water's edge, fishing. Maass, a sportsfisherman himself, was intrigued, and the encounter inspired him to make the documentary film "Gotham Fish Tales," a lighthearted look at the city's aquatic residents (everything from the regal striped bass to the forgotten sea horse) and the many locals who spend hours in their pursuit. One of them is Philip Frabocilo, a cabdriver whose trunk is full of fishing rods and whose dashboard is covered with proud snapshots of the ones that didn't get away. On July 31 at 8, Maass, along with Frabocilo and others from the film, will introduce the movie at an outdoor riverside screening. "The great thing about this event is that it's right next to where all this life is," the director says. (The River Project, Pier 26, West St. at N. Moore St. For more information, call 212-233-3030.)

READINGS
July 31 at 7: The novelists and short-story writers John Beckman ("A Winter Zoo"), Touré ("The Portable Promised Land"), and Lawrence Krauser ("Lemon") offer selections from their work. The former Del Fuegos guitarist Warren Zanes will also be on hand. (Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Tickets at the door.) ♦ Aug. 5 at 7:30: George Plimpton, Paul Auster, and other contributors to the *Paris Review* celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the literary journal with an alfresco reading of their work. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777.)

MORE TALKS
July 30 at 8: The writer Jorge Just is the guest curator for the latest local installment of the Trampoline Hall Lectures, a Toronto-based series of talks featuring folks holding forth on subjects in which they are *not* experts (last month's event included a sausage-loving journalist who made a link out of two Extra Value Meals). Tonight's show includes the independent-radio producer Jamie York, who, although he does not own a car, will talk about the traffic guru Sam Schwartz, a.k.a. Gridlock Sam. (The Marquee, 356 Bowery. Tickets at the door.)

TOUR
Aug. 2 at 11 A.M.: Firsthand NY Walks presents a musical shuffle through the Bronx, stopping at significant points in the history of the mambo and hip-hop. For more information, call 212-836-0692.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www.lincolncenter.org

July 29 on PBS at 8:00 EST Check your local listings.

MOVIES OPENING

AMERICAN WEDDING
In the third installment of the "American Pie" series, Jim (Jason Biggs) and Michelle (Alyson Hannigan) tie the knot. Jesse Dylan directed. The cast includes Eugene Levy and Seann William Scott. Opening Aug. 1.

AND NOW LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
A romantic drama in which a jewel thief (Jeremy Irons) and a jazz singer (Patricia Kaas) meet in Morocco, both suffering from injuries that have damaged their memories. Claude Lelouch directed. In French, English, Arabic, and Italian. Opening Aug. 1.

GIGLI
Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck play mismatched gangsters, in a romantic comedy directed by Martin Brest. Opening Aug. 1.

THE MAGDALENE SISTERS
The writer-director Peter Mullan's drama about "fallen" Irish women in nineteen-sixties Ireland who were forced to work as laundresses for the Catholic Church. Opening Aug. 1. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village Theatre VII.)

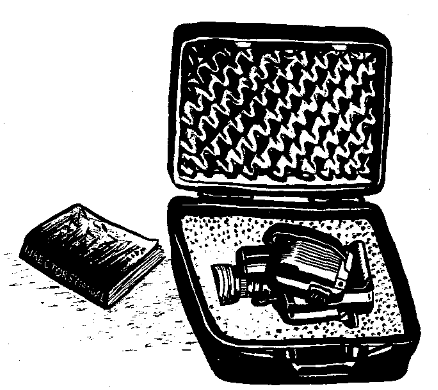
THE SECRET LIVES OF DENTISTS
Alan Rudolph adapts Jane Smiley's novella "The Age of Grief," with Campbell Scott playing a dentist who suspects that his wife (Hope Davis) is cheating on him. Also with Robin Tunney and Denis Leary. Opening Aug. 1. (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

FILM NOTES

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM
A crowd-pleasing British movie devoted to the radical idea that girls can play soccer and sprain their ankles. Jess (Parminder Nagra) is a Sikh who hides her love of the game from her conservative parents, while Jules (Keira Knightley) is a tomboy who defies her English mother. Both have a thing for their Irish coach, Joe (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers)—he of the wounded knee and the watery eyes. The movie is a hodgepodge: nicely barbed scenes with Jess's family bump against weird practice montages that play like sports-bra ads. What it all adds up to is multicultural empowerment for the pre-teen shin-guard crowd.—*Michael Agger* (Cinema Village, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS
Andrew Jarecki's startling documentary offers an approach to truth as richly nuanced but ultimately as futile as Kurosawa's great "Rashomon." In 1987, in Great Neck, Long Island, the police arrested a beloved retired schoolteacher, Arnold Friedman, and his son Jesse on the charge of sexually abusing the young boys who regularly gathered at the Friedman home for computer lessons. Jarecki interviews the police, the attorneys, the judge, and the alleged victims in the case, but the heart of the movie is the family's own footage: the layers of Friedman home movies and stills and the voluminous videos shot by David Friedman, the oldest Friedman boy, throughout the crisis. The two accused men were part of a loving family of five, although Mrs. Friedman, emotionally stranded by her husband, was not part of the jokes and the camaraderie. Before our astounded eyes the entire fantastic mess unfolds like a bloody Greek legend—the House of Atreus reincarnated in a middle-class Jewish family. Edited by Richard Hankin.—*David Denby* (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.)

CHARLIE'S ANGELS: FULL THROTTLE
The sensationally long-waisted Cameron Diaz, a goofy beauty with a foot-wide smile, takes the pratfalls; Drew Barrymore, defiantly clinging to baby fat, is moody and unfulfilled, with hidden areas of melancholy; Lucy Liu, flinging her black hair around like a weapon, is the most imperious and beautiful of the three. They spend most of their time flipping over backward in the air in gorgeous slow-mo and then falling down in a heap and having laughing fits. The second installment of the "Charlie's Angels" franchise is immensely pleased with itself in the manner of adorable kids who know they can get away with anything—the movie's commercial opportunism is so self-confident in its silliness that you can't really fight it. Everything goes down easy except the strained presence of Demi Moore as an ex-Angel who has gone over to the dark side. The super-tight closeups reveal her usual lack of humor and what is normally called talent and also her utter determination to prevail—an unwitting reminder of how much work, in a picture like this, must go into the illusion of frivolous inconsequence. Directed by the former music-video ace McG.—*D.D.* (7/7/03) (Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)



CHRISTOPHER STRONG
An arch, high-strung, sickeningly noble Katharine Hepburn movie, but one of the rare movies told from a woman's sexual point of view. Directed by Dorothy Arzner from a screenplay by Zoë Akins, this 1933 film tells the story of a record-breaking English aviatrix who falls in love with a distinguished political figure (Colin Clive). As soon as they go to bed together, he insists—late on the very first night—that she not fly in the contest she is entered in. It's the intelligent woman's primal postcoital scene. In movies up to the seventies, this primal scene was never played out satisfactorily; the woman always gave in, either in the pasteup screwball style that provided the fake resolutions of the forties, or, as in this picture, fatally. The directing seems enervated and the film was a flop, but it's not one that independent-minded women can easily forget.—*Pauline Kael* (Gramercy Theatre; Aug. 4.)

THE ECLIPSE
Some like it cold. Michelangelo Antonioni on alienation, this time with Alain Delon and, of course, Monica Vitti. Even she looks as if she has given up in this one. In Italian. Originally released in 1962.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 1 and Aug. 3.)

THE EMBALMER
A handsome young man apprentices with a dwarfish fifty-year-old taxidermist in the director Matteo Garrone's unconventional romantic drama. When the closeted older man falls for his pupil—who's also being wooed by a beautiful woman—a taut battle of wills develops. The movie is a gripping and obsessive work, a look at loneliness and desire that's more about the con than the kinkiness. In Italian.—*Bruce Diones* (Quad Cinema.)

FINDING NEMO
The latest flood of wizardry from Pixar, whose productions, from "Toy Story" onward, have lent an indispensable vigor and wit to the sagging art of mainstream animation. Whether the new movie, directed by Andrew Stanton, will add much to that resuscitation is another matter. Albert Brooks provides the voice of Marlin, a non-amusing clown fish who sees his young son, Nemo, borne off in a diver's net. Not to be daunted, and plainly unfazed by the threat of both sharks and sentimentality, Marlin sets off to rescue his only child. You'll never guess how it ends. The technical skill on show is beyond question, but, as yet another computer-generated seascape ripples past, you may be tempted to ask whether that skill is driving the story; Marlin just drifts from one semi-heroic feat to the next, and the characters seldom get their hooks, or their jaws, into you with the pointed, snippy comedy that we have come to associate with Woody and Buzz Lightyear. Also, not to be impolite or anything, but how expressive is a fish, until it hits a grill? With the voices of Geoffrey Rush, Barry Humphries, Willem Dafoe, Allison Janney, and—the funniest of the shoal—Ellen DeGeneres.—*Anthony Lane* (6/9/03) (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, and Union Square.)

GARAGE DAYS
The visually inventive director Alex Proyas, the talent behind the Kafkaesque fantasy "Dark City," unwinds a bit with this breezy tale of Australian rock musicians on the rise. The story line is nothing new—tangled romances and life on the road—but Proyas gets fresh performances from his little-seen cast, and his pyrotechnic directorial style deftly mirrors the band's exploding emotions.—*B.D.* (Empire 25.)

THE HOUSEKEEPER
A pretty and pliant young woman (Émilie Dequenne) signs on as a housekeeper with a dyspeptic middle-aged Parisian sound engineer (Jean-Pierre Bacri) whose wife has left him; she not only takes over her employer's mop and broom, she takes over his bed. Claude Berri's film, from a novel by Christian Oster, is a study in limited consciousness. The man, we realize, is a bit of a sourpuss, the girl rather bovine and undiscriminating. But when they move to the coast of Brittany for a vacation, she becomes a lot less pliant. Berri keeps the story small-scaled, tart, and closely observed. The movie doesn't have the emotional range or the cruelty of a work of art, but everything in it feels right. In French.—*D.D.* (7/28/03) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Village East Cinemas.)

THE HUSTLER
The test of what a man has inside him—the basic Hemingway-style masculine story that's frequently set in the bullring or, in this country, in the world of sports, especially among prizefighters—is set here in the world of pool sharks. Paul Newman is the young contender, Fast Eddie Felson, and Jackie Gleason is the old champ, Minnesota Fats. But Hemingway would cut out extraneous material, thereby raising the simple, unadorned test to the level of myth. The director Robert Rossen and his co-writer, Sidney Carroll, surround the test with an extra forty minutes or so of flabby "poetry." This 1961 picture is swollen with windy thoughts and murky notions of perversions, and as Eddie's manager the magnetic young George C. Scott seems to be a Satan figure, but it has strength and conviction, and Newman gives a fine, emotional performance. You can see all the picture's faults and still love it.—*P.K.* (Moving Image; Aug. 3.)

THE ITALIAN JOB
Edward Norton, pulling his chin down and showing off a mean spot of beard, acts the mild and recessive Mark Wahlberg off the screen in this elaborate international heist movie about bad and good gold thieves. As a piece of summer-season craftsmanship the movie is fine: the camera rises majestically over the Dolomites, and in Venice, speedboats churn up the canals and head into blind turns. There's a dangerous-looking chase in which a small black helicopter hovers right over a car in the streets of Los Angeles, and the director F. Gary Gray uses a fleet of buzzing, squared-off Minis extremely well, shooting the tiny cars into a subway tunnel just ahead of a train, making them jump and spin and flip like toys. Don't expect much more, however, than a pleasant workout. Seth Green and Mos Def are very funny in minor roles. With the creamy Charlize Theron as the daughter of master criminal Donald Sutherland.—*D.D.* (6/16/03) (Battery Park 16 and 72nd Street East.)

THE LOST COMMAND
Mark Robson's hundred-and-thirty-minute combat epic from 1966, based on Jean Larteguy's

novel "The Centurions," encompasses France's colonial disasters in Indochina and Algiers and boasts battle scenes at once crystalline and magnetic, filmed in Spain. It also sports the risky casting typical of the era's multinational superproductions: Anthony Quinn as a Basque peasant turned French field officer, George Segal as an Arab in his squad at Dien Bien Phu who becomes a revolutionary leader in Algiers, and Claudia Cardinale as Segal's bomb-smuggling sister back in the Casbah. Luckily, under Robson's direction, they register with force and ease in a mostly Gallic ensemble including Jean Servais—even wearier than he was in "Rififi"—as a ruthless general; charismatic Maurice Ronet as a soldier prone to massacre and torture; and a surprisingly eloquent Alain Delon as the corps idealist who comes to see the futility of Frenchmen waging wars in the Third World. Despite Nelson Gidding's pedestrian script, Robson's lucid filmmaking makes the action seem prescient, especially when Quinn commandeers a helicopter to root out Algerian guerrillas. Depicting slaughters of innocents on both the French and Algerian sides, viewing good soldiers as men caught between, this picture anticipates films about Americans' foreign misadventures with a moral poise few of them would achieve.—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; Aug. 2.)

The International Black Panther Film Festival, founded by Kathleen Cleaver and Jamal Joseph, begins in Harlem on July 31.

ZOHAR LAZAR

MASKED AND ANONYMOUS

Bob Dylan's first foray into film in fifteen years should be considered his first film in almost thirty: the mid-eighties abomination "Hearts of Fire" isn't good for much but a punch line. "Masked and Anonymous," directed by the "Seinfeld" vet Larry Charles and probably written largely by Dylan himself (the credited scriptwriters seem to be pseudonyms) takes place in a near-future America torn apart by revolution; Jack Fate (Dylan) is a washed-up rock star who gets roped into a benefit concert by the unscrupulous promoter Uncle Sweetheart (John Goodman). Dylan's most ambitious songs have always been alarmingly overpopulated—think "Desolation Row"—and that spirit suffuses the film, which doesn't skimp on the supporting cast: there's a harried television producer (Jessica Lange), a cynical journalist (Jeff Bridges), a shifty roadie (Luke Wilson), a disreputable politician (Mickey Rourke), an unhinged animal lover (Val Kilmer), and even a mysterious Lady in Red (Angela Bassett). Dylan, with a huge cowboy hat atop his stringbean body, moves through the film stolidly, though he is required to cry at one point. Whenever there's a slack moment in the political allegory, which is a kind of crazy quilt of Shakespeare, Gabriel García Márquez, and "Putney Swope," the soundtrack—split between fierce performances by Dylan's crack touring band and world-music covers of Dylan standards—redeems it. And though the plot, such as it is, unravels toward the end, the movie holds its own as part of the Dylan canon: it's knowing without always being knowledgeable, darkly humorous, full of wisdom both faux and real, and genuinely mysterious.—*Ben Greenman* (Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.)

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL

As the deposed pirate captain Jack Sparrow, Johnny Depp does not so much walk as sashay into a scene, and he wears more eyeshadow than Tammy Faye Bakker. He gives this exuberant family entertainment an amiable sheen of silliness (the performance offers diverse echoes of W. C. Fields, Toshiro Mifune, and Keith Richards on a bender). Depp leaves a lot of the duelling and all of the lovemaking to Orlando Bloom (from "The Lord of the Rings"), who plays a young blacksmith with pirate blood in his veins, a fellow much loved by the daughter of the British governor of a Caribbean colony, Keira Knightley (she has a thing for swashbucklers). The movie is based on the famous old Disneyland ride, and it's good, cheesy fun, complete with tall ships, battles at sea, and accursed pirates who turn into skeletons at night. As Barbossa, the pirate who deposed Captain Jack, Geoffrey Rush eyeballs his victims and stretches out his syllables in the taunting manner of Robert Newton, who specialized in stump-legged scoundrels fifty years ago.—*D.D.* (7/28/03) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

SEABISCUIT

Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Beekman, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

SPELLBOUND

Jeffrey Blitz's charming documentary follows eight elementary students competing in the 1999 National Spelling Bee; he rode the bus to school with them, interviewed their teachers, checked out their rooms, and, in one case, listened while a kid talked like a robot. The sample of children is appropriately diverse—in region, in race, in the thoroughness of their preparations. Some of their parents see the spelling bee as representing the immigrant dream of America in miniature, while others seem amazed at the intensity of their nerdy offspring. The competitions are tense, and Blitz cobbles together a series of heartbreaking reaction shots of errant spellers. His direction shows a clever, occasionally flippant selection of detail—the dog-eared unabridged dictionaries, the congratulatory sign posted outside Hooters, the prodigy who signs his autographs "Trust in Jesus."—*M.A.* (Empire 25, New York Twin, and Quad Cinema.)

SUNSET BOULEVARD

A young scriptwriter (William Holden), speeding away from the finance-company men who have come to repossess his car (it is Los Angeles, where a man can get along without his honor, but not without his car), turns into a driveway on Sunset Boulevard and finds himself at the decaying mansion of the once great silent star Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson). Attended by her butler (Erich von Stroheim), who was once her husband and her director, she lives among the mementos of her past, and plots her comeback in her own adaptation of "Salome." The rapacious old vamp persuades the young man to stay and work with her on the script; he becomes her kept man, her lover, her victim. The details are baroque: the rats in the empty swimming pool, the wind moaning in the organ pipes, the midnight burial of a pet chimpanzee. The glint-eyed Swanson clutches at her comeback role almost as if it were Salome, yet the acting honors belong to Holden. When he makes love to the crazy, demanding old woman, his face shows a mixture of pity and guilt and nausea. This brittle, satiric tribute to Hollywood's leopard-skin past—it's narrated by a corpse—is almost too clever, yet it's at its best in this cleverness, and is slightly banal in the sequences dealing with a normal girl (Nancy Olson) and modern Hollywood. Billy Wilder directed. With Buster Keaton, Hedda Hopper, and Cecil B. De Mille. Originally released in 1950.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; starting Aug. 1.)

SWIMMING POOL

Charlotte Rampling gives another outstanding performance, this time as an uptight mystery writer who accepts an offer from her publisher to use his house in the South of France for some inspiration. When his sexy daughter (the luscious Ludivine Sagnier) shows up uninvited, a slow-burning and deliberately abstract mystery is set in motion. The director François Ozon (who's worked with Rampling before, in the very similar "Under the Sand") crafts a seductive puzzle that may have audiences wondering, in a pleasant way, what it was that they have just seen. In French and English.—*B.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Sunshine Cinema.)

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES

"Ah'll be beck," Arnold Schwarzenegger said in the first "Terminator" picture, in 1984, and Schwarzenegger is not a man to renege on his promises. In fact, as you watch him clamber into the old black leathers for the third time and cock his weapon of choice, you could be excused for feeling that he's never been away. This latest and stalest installment of the "Terminator" saga is directed not by James Cameron, the father of the franchise, but by Jonathan Mostow; he does a dogged job, and you can see where the money went (a hundred and seventy million dollars, apparently), but in the process, the lurking threat of the earlier movies has been squeezed out. One mystery remains: was it commercial good sense, or mere cynicism, to have the plot of Mostow's film so gleefully replicate that of "Terminator 2: Judgement Day"? The new nemesis is a gleaming female cyborg named T-X (Kristanna Loken), who spurns all emotion save for a sudden, violent attraction to a giant magnet. Meanwhile, the fate of the world rests in the hands of a young couple (Claire Danes and Nick Stahl), who seem understandably peeved at the responsibility. As for the machines of the subtitle, to what position, exactly, have they risen? Are they running the studio?—*A.L.* (7/14 & 21/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

28 DAYS LATER

Another helpful development for the British Tourist Board. Danny Boyle's horror film, alternately savage and glum, shows London—and, by implication, most of England—destroyed by a fast-acting plague. Borne in the blood, it passes from one Brit to another with a single bite; soon, the capital is empty save for marauding zombies, leaving the unchewed—such as Jim (Cillian Murphy) and Selena (Naomie Harris)—to drift around, shop without paying, and never quite have sex. Any resemblance to normal teen-age behavior is entirely coincidental. Brendan Gleeson, much the best and cheeriest thing in the movie, plays a taxi-driver who helps them to leave town; from here on, Boyle and his screenwriter, Alex Garland, run out of gas. The picture is twitchy and annoying, flecked with blood and half-digested ideas, and too much is left unexplained. As a scheme for solving central London's traffic problem, though, it is unlikely to be surpassed.—*A.L.* (6/30/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

WHALE RIDER

The lush landscape of New Zealand is majestically filmed in the writer-director Niki Caro's drama about a young girl (a radiant Keisha Castle-Hughes) who must persuade her Maori tribe that she was born to be their leader. It's an empowerment fable, but done with disarming subtlety. Caro's film avoids the mawkish and saccharine pitfalls of these sorts of stories, winning over the audience instead with a surefooted and inspiring sense of tradition.—*B.D.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, 59th Street East Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

WINGED MIGRATION

The French filmmaker Jacques Perrin shows us things we have never seen before: the alien world of insects in "Microcosmos" and, now, migrating birds in all their airborne glory. Perrin and his team of camera operators employ remote-control gliders and balloons to astonishing effect—the camera literally flies alongside the birds as they wing their way north and south in their search for food. They capture some amazing solo efforts, like the common murre who plunges off a ten-story seaside cliff, as well as the beauty of numbers, as in the scene of an entire flock of white-faced whistling ducks, all turning their heads at once. The images are mostly left alone, with minimal dialogue and endurable New Age music. Bird-lovers will be in heaven, and the less ornithologically inclined will be surprised to learn that some Canada geese don't hang around golf courses all winter. Among the more unforgettable birds on display is the Clark's grebe, which can pull off the cool trick of walking on water.—*M.A.* (Paris and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

BAD BOYS II

Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

BUFFALO SOLDIERS

Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, and Lincoln Square.

CAMP

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.

DIRTY PRETTY THINGS

Cinema 2, Lincoln Square, and Sunshine Cinema.

HOW TO DEAL

Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village East Cinemas.

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: THE CRADLE OF LIFE

Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, Village Theatre VII, and Ziegfeld.

MONDAYS IN THE SUN

Angelika Film Center and New York Twin.

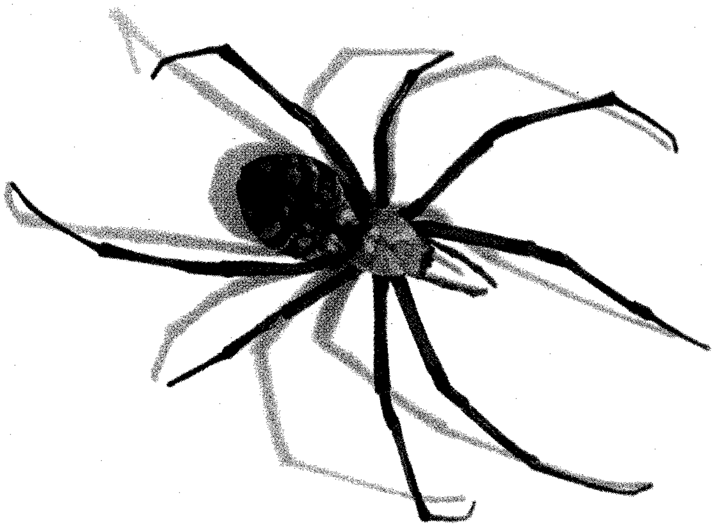
NORTHFORK

Angelika Film Center, 62nd & Broadway, and Village East Cinemas.

SPY KIDS 3-D: GAME OVER

Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 1, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Twin, and 34th Street Theatre.

{ *Along came a spider and sat down beside her and enlightened Miss Muffet as to the many benefits of a strongly diversified portfolio.* }



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Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Sept. 7: "Eyes Wide Open: The Evolution of Widescreen Cinema." Aug. 2-3 at 2: "Jailhouse Rock" (1957, Richard Thorpe). ♦ Aug. 2 at 4: "Some Came Running" (1958, Vincente Minnelli). ♦ Aug. 3 at 4: "The Hustler" (†). ♦ Repertory nights. Aug. 1 at 7:30 and Aug. 2-3 at 6:30: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through Aug. 29: "The Return of Kurosawa and Mifune." All films are in Japanese. Aug. 1-3 at 2, 5:10, and 8:20: "The Lower Depths" (1957). ♦ Aug. 4-5 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Drunken Angel" (1948).

THE INTERNATIONAL BLACK PANTHER FILM FESTIVAL
Aaron Davis Hall, W. 135th St. and Convent Ave. (212-662-0006)—July 31-Aug. 4: Among the highlights of the five days of screenings are St. Claire Bourne's documentary on John Henrik Clarke and Robert Mugge's concert film on Gil Scott-Heron, "Black Wax." See www.pantherfilmfest.com for a complete schedule and film locations.

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Starting Aug. 1 at 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:50, and 10: A restored print of Billy Wilder's "Sunset Boulevard" (†).

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through Aug. 17: A Dorothy Arzner retrospective. Aug. 1 at 6:15: "Working Girls" (1931). ♦ Aug. 1 at 8: "The Wild Party" (1929). ♦ Aug. 2 at 1: "Paramount on Parade" (1930). ♦ Aug. 2 at 3:30: "Honor Among Lovers" (1931). ♦ Aug. 2 at 6: "Anybody's Woman" (1930). ♦ Aug. 2 at 8: "Sarah and Son" (1930). ♦ Aug. 4 at 6: "First Comes Courage" (1943). ♦ Aug. 4 at 8: "Christopher Strong" (†). ♦ Summer repertory classics. Aug. 1 at 2: "The Age of Innocence" (1993, Martin Scorsese). ♦ Aug. 1 at 4:45: "Million Dollar Legs" (1932, Edward F. Cline). ♦ Aug. 3 at 2: "The Life of Oharu" (1952, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 3 at 4:30: "Tales of Ugetsu" (1953, Mizoguchi; in Japanese). ♦ Aug. 3 at 6:30: "Utamaro and His Five Women" (1946, Mizoguchi; in Japanese).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. Aug. 1-2: "Harold and Maude" (1971, Hal Ashby).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through Aug. 31: "Classic Thalia from the Kino International Collection." Aug. 1 at 7, Aug. 2 at 3, and Aug. 3 at 7: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography" (1992, Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, and Stuart Samuels). ♦ Aug. 1 at 8:45, Aug. 2 at 4:45, and Aug. 3 at 8:45: "Fellini's 8½" (1963, Federico Fellini; in Italian). ♦ Aug. 2 at 8 and Aug. 3 at 2:30: "Andrei Roublev" (1966, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Russian).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through Aug. 7: "Man in the Shadows: The Films of Alain Delon." July 30 at 4:30 and 8:30 and Aug. 2 at 4: "Three Men to Kill" (1980, Jacques Deray; in French). ♦ July 30 at 6:20, July 31 at 3:30, and Aug. 2 at 8:30: "For a Cop's Hide" (1981, Delon; in French). ♦ Aug. 1 at 4 and 8:45 and Aug. 3 at 9:15: "The Eclipse" (†). ♦ Aug. 1 at 6:30, Aug. 4 at 4, and Aug. 5 at 9:15: "The Professor" (1972, Valerio Zurlini; in French). ♦ Aug. 2 at 2, Aug. 3 at 4:45, and Aug. 4 at 6:15: "The Return of Casanova" (1992, Édouard Niermans; in French). ♦ Aug. 2 at 6: "The Lost Command" (†). ♦ Aug. 3 at 1 and Aug. 4 at 8:15: "The Leopard" (1963, Luchino Visconti; in Italian). ♦ Aug. 3 at 6:45: "The Fighter" (1983, Delon; in French).

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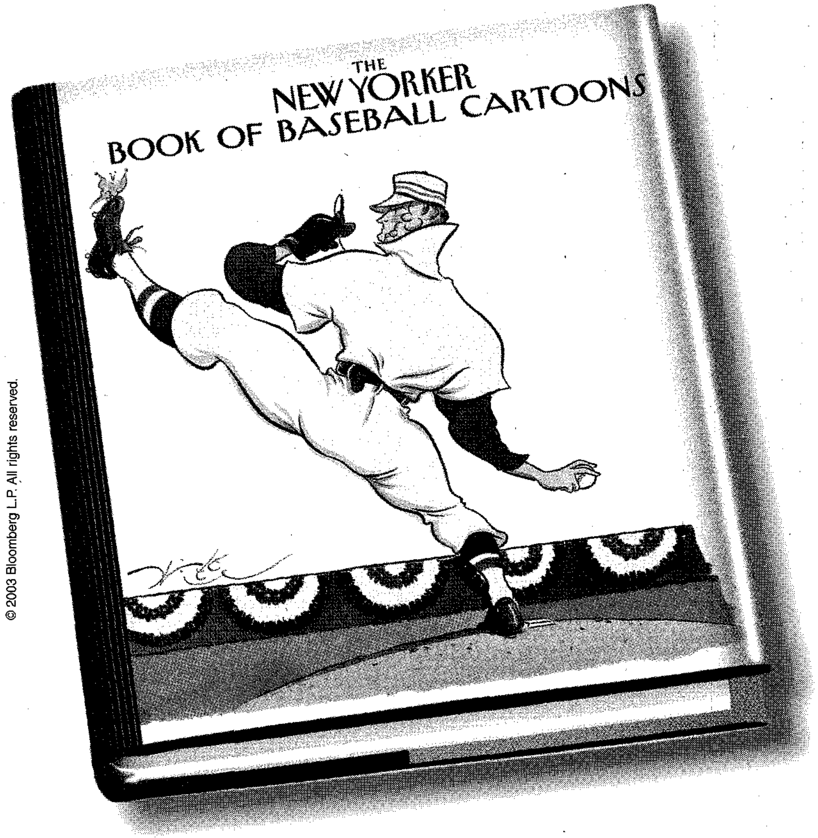
Major League Laughs!


THE NEW YORKER
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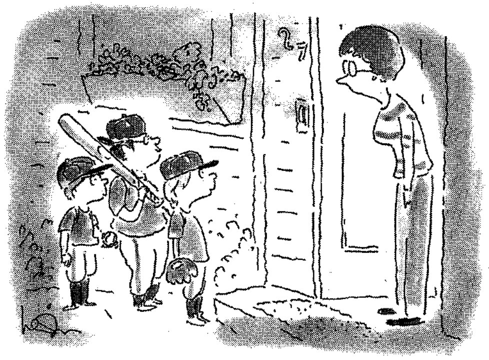

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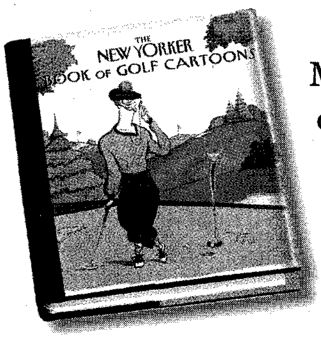
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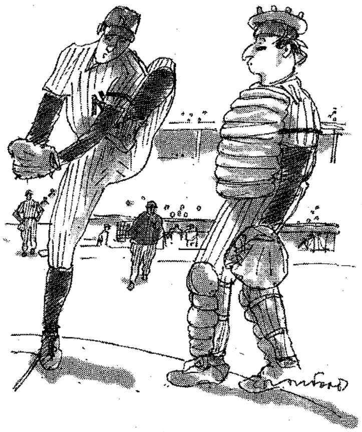

"Gimme a hand—I'm stuck."

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
BUSINESS AS USUAL

A year ago this week, President Bush signed into law the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which requires corporate C.E.O.s to certify the accuracy of their companies' financial statements, prohibits retaliation against whistle-blowers, and raises the maximum penalty for securities fraud to twenty-five years in jail. Bush, a former director of Harken Energy, never seemed comfortable in the role of corporate scourge, but his hand had been forced by multibillion-dollar scandals at Enron, WorldCom, Global Crossing, and many other big companies. "Every corporate official who has chosen to commit a crime can expect to face the consequences," he declared, adopting the rhetoric of a latter-day Teddy Roosevelt. "No more easy money for corporate criminals—just hard time."

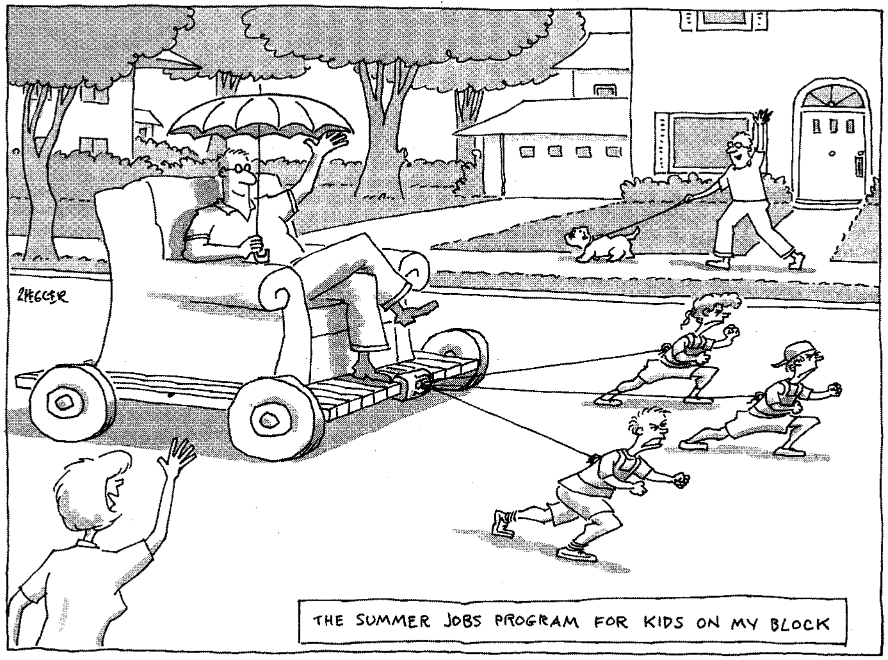
Last Wednesday, one disgraced corporate chief duly entered the Schuylkill Federal Correctional Institution, in Minersville, Pennsylvania, but it wasn't Kenneth Lay, of Enron, or Bernie Ebbers, of WorldCom. It was Samuel Waksal—a founder of ImClone Systems, a tiny pharmaceuticals company—who was starting a seven-year prison term. In October, Waksal pleaded guilty to charges that he had engaged in insider dealing after learning that the Food and Drug Administration was about to reject an application for Erbitux, ImClone's cancer drug. In connection with the case, Martha Stewart, Waksal's friend and fellow-stockholder, will stand trial on obstruction-of-justice charges in January. Insider dealing is a serious lapse, but it isn't even in the same league as creating hundreds of millions of dollars in fake profits (Enron), disguising day-to-day expenditures as capital investments (WorldCom), or booking nonexistent revenues to keep the stock price up (Global Crossing, Lucent, and others too numerous to mention). The failure to hold the C.E.O.s accountable for these acts has done nothing to dampen suspicions that Waksal and Stewart are convenient scapegoats.

Understandable as those suspicions may be, the Bush Administration has in fact taken steps to deter future wrongdoers. The interagency Corporate Fraud Task Force, which was set up last summer, has helped to bring charges against Dennis Kozlowski, the former chairman and chief executive of Tyco International; John Rigas, the chairman of Adelphia Communications; Andrew Fastow, Enron's former chief financial officer; and Scott Sullivan, Fastow's opposite number at WorldCom.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

In addition, the White House has nearly doubled the budget of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and it supported the establishment of a Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, to make sure that auditing firms do their job properly. The Wall Street veteran William Donaldson, who became chairman of the S.E.C. in February, is trying to oblige senior executives to pay civil fines out of their own pockets, and to make it less difficult for shareholders to propose board members. The head of the accounting board, William J. McDonough, is a former president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, and he is not likely to be an easy mark for unscrupulous bookkeepers.

The reforms show that the American political system, bloated and disfigured by corporate contributions though it is, can still react to public outrage. But now that the public has cooled off and the stock market has heated up, the Bush Administration is showing signs of reverting to its customary practices of pandering to big business and stymieing the institutions



THE SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM FOR KIDS ON MY BLOCK

that police it. Nobody has ever gone broke overestimating the links between the Republican Party and the corporate rich—least of all, the Bush-Cheney reëlection committee. Nor should anyone doubt the capacity of corporate influence peddlers to mount a successful rear-guard action. Already, determined lobbying appears to have derailed proposals that would have forced law firms to report clients that persistently broke the law.

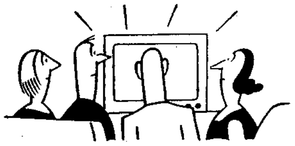
As Warren Buffett has pointed out, the level of C.E.O. compensation will be the "acid test" of improved corporate governance. In 2002, according to a *Fortune* survey of a hundred of the nation's biggest companies, neither scandal nor a slumping economy prevented the typical C.E.O. from getting a raise of fourteen per cent, bringing his total take-home pay to more than thirteen million dollars. Meanwhile, the executive stock option, which caused much of the trouble in the first place, continues to thrive. A few companies, like Microsoft, have abandoned options in favor of different forms of pay, but most big firms continue to hand out remuneration packages that reward C.E.O.s for a general rise in the stock market rather than for individual merit. During Wall Street's recent rally, several executives who were part of the last technology bubble took the opportunity to cash in. Scott Kriens, the C.E.O. of Juniper Networks, made about seven and a half million dollars; David Wetherell, the chairman of CMGI, picked up almost five million.

The S.E.C. just approved new rules that will require C.E.O.s to submit their pay packages to the shareholders, but this won't mean much unless the outside directors who set pay levels challenge the imperial C.E.O.s who still dominate many companies. Sanford Weill, for example, made headlines a couple of weeks ago when he said that he was resigning as the C.E.O. of Citigroup. Look closely at his announcement, however, and you will notice that he is staying on as chairman until 2006; that he has handpicked his successor, with little input from the board; and that there is no guarantee that, when 2006 rolls around, he will actually leave.

In Washington last week, William Donaldson suggested that the worst corporate scandals are behind us. That may be, but elsewhere in the capital it has emerged that Freddie Mac, the federally sponsored company that was set up to enable moderate-income Americans to buy their own homes, has been massaging its earnings and paying its former chief executive, Leland Brendsel, five million dollars a year. In California, Tenet Healthcare, the nation's second-biggest hospital chain, has been accused of defrauding Medicare of hundreds of millions of dollars. Tenet's former chairman, Jeffrey Barbakow, cashed in stock options worth a hundred and eleven million dollars in 2002, which made him the highest-paid executive in the country. Since the news broke of a federal investigation into Tenet's finances, stockholders have seen the value of their investments fall by seventy-five per cent. In hailing the progress of the Corporate Fraud Task Force, the White House claimed last week that "C.E.O.s and other executives who fudged the numbers and deceived investors are being held accountable." But, so far, neither Brendsel nor Barbakow has been charged with any wrongdoing.

—*John Cassidy*

CRIME SCENE
SHOTS IN THE BALCONY



Last Wednesday at about four o'clock, Ed Kosner, who will be departing as editor of the *News* in March, was sitting in his office, overlooking the paper's newsroom, and examining a photograph that would become the next day's front page: it showed Councilman James Davis being carried down the steps of City Hall on a stretcher; he was shirtless, and attached to a respirator. Two hours earlier, Davis had been shot in the balcony of the City Council chamber, but little else was known, and the television in Kosner's office, tuned to ABC News, showed portions of lower Manhattan being shut down as the city's emergency plan was put into effect.

"Who is that?" Kosner asked. "That's the dead guy? The City Council guy?"

A photo editor nodded. "There was a bidding game going on," he said. "There was some video of him going into the hospital that went to about four thousand dollars, which we stepped back from. The *Sun* took the bid."

Kosner leaned back in his chair. "This is a tabloid game," he said. "Tomorrow, we're doing a sixteen-page wraparound edition for this story. It's going to be hard to top that picture of him being brought out of City Hall."

By Thursday morning, all the elements of the classic tabloid drama were in place: a hero named Richie, a victim who went by Rocky, a villain called Othniel Boaz Askew, a mysterious business relationship, backroom politics, a balcony assassination. It was operatic, in a nineteenth-century Tammany way, but also, in a modern sense, sordid, involving a fame-obsessed killer reminiscent of Rupert Pupkin, in "The King of Comedy." By Day 2, the story had abandoned the steps of City Hall and moved to Brooklyn and beyond, where there was sadomasochism, modelling, nude hammer attacks, and other unsavory behavior to uncover.

"That's how the story seems to be evolving now, that this guy is a very interesting, strange character," Kosner said at the end of the week, after the *News* ran a front-page photo of Askew posing, shirtless, arms and legs spread, in low-rise yellow leather pants. "Two days running, we had the most compelling images about this story," Kosner said, "which is, after all, what it's about."

The day after the tragedy, City Hall began, slowly, to resemble its normal, sleepy summer self. At the guard desk outside Council Speaker Gifford Miller's office, Jerry Staffieri, a Council sergeant at arms, greeted staffers and reporters with a sombre handshake. "Were you upstairs yesterday?" he'd say, almost whispering. "There's trauma people inside who might make you feel a little better."

Gary Altman, the legislative counsel, sat in an empty briefing room and tried to put the events in perspective. Altman, who is short and bald, with a nervous manner, is the unofficial in-house historian. "The only other kind of demonstration we had here during a Council meeting was about ten years ago," he said. "ACT UP"—the AIDS-awareness organization—"was in the balcony, and they started throwing down condoms."

Altman had been on the chamber floor himself, walking toward the Speaker, when Askew, in the balcony, began unloading rounds from his .40-calibre pistol. "*Pop-pop!* Very loud," Altman said, shaking his head and looking down. "People are shouting 'Get down!' but no one's getting down, and the place is almost like chaos, just pushing chairs and pandemonium," he continued. "What I actually thought was: Anwar Sadat's assassination. You know, the famous military parade, and the people come off the vehicle and assassinate Sadat—and afterward the chairs are all over the place, a chaos of chairs." He appeared to be trembling.

By now, the chamber had been restored to its proper order, save for a missing desk in the third row—a tribute to Councilman Davis.

A young man wearing a yellow T-shirt—an intern for Betsy Gotbaum, the public advocate—interrupted Altman. "I'm just here to pick up my umbrella," he said. "Do you think I'm going to have to talk to any more police?" Altman gave the intern a hug. "Two years ago, a police officer ran down a mother in Brooklyn walking her toddler, and she was nine months pregnant," he said. "We went to the wake, and there was the mother in the casket with her four-year-old and a newborn baby. You see these things and you think, I can never see something like that again. And then 9/11, and . . . life goes on."

Speaker Miller stopped off at City Hall just before six o'clock. He'd spent much of the day comforting Council staff across the street, and then had gone to Brooklyn—to Davis's district office, and to the home of his mother. Miller ducked into his office just long enough to grab a cake and a present—it was his wife's birthday—and was escorted into a black Chevy Suburban with tinted windows.

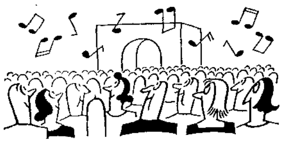
"It's been a tough thirty-six hours," he said as the car pulled onto Park Row. "He was a remarkable guy. Terrible thing to happen." Miller called his wife—"I'm getting on the F.D.R."—and finally took a moment to reflect. "Yesterday, there was more action, so I think there was sort of less emotion," he said. "It was incredibly frightening. Today's not frightening. Today's been a hard day—a lot of people in pain."

While terrorism had at first seemed a natural explanation to many people in the chamber, Miller said that the possibility had never crossed his mind. "I wasn't giving much thought to Al Qaeda," he said. "In politics, you deal a lot with people who are a little bit crazy. Most of them aren't dangerous."

The Chevy pulled up to a brownstone on East Eighty-second Street. Miller's wife, Pamela, was standing on the stoop with their two sons. "Hold on, don't get out," a security aide said sharply, before whispering into a microphone fastened to his shirt. Miller took a deep breath. After a minute, the aide said, "All clear," and Miller opened the door, quickly putting on a smile.

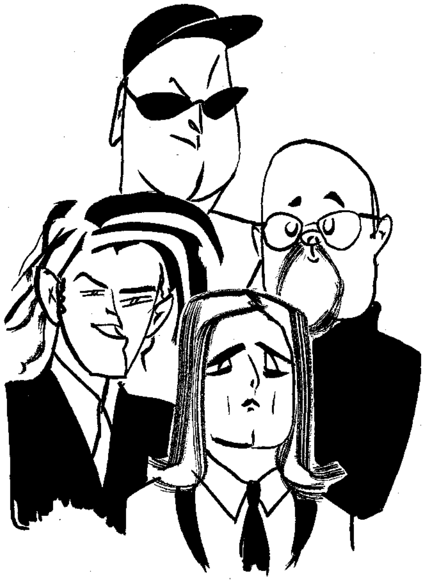
—*Ben McGrath*

CHEAP TICKETS DEPT.
WANTING YOU TO WANT ME



When a rock band has conquered the world, sold millions of records, been the top of the pops and the toast of the town, seen its fortunes fall both critically and commercially, as an autumn leaf falls from a tree, and then watched as, in strict defiance of the descensional behavior of autumn leaves, its critical reputation rose once again, only to be met by stubborn indifference on the part of the record industry and the consumers who follow its lead, what's next?

The promotional in-store appearance, of course. And so the four members of Cheap Trick—the guitarist Rick Nielsen, the singer Robin Zander, the bassist Tom Petersson, and the drummer Bun E. Carlos—came to the Virgin Megastore in Times Square last week to celebrate the release of the band's sixteenth album, "Special One." Twenty-five years ago, the band played a series of dates at the Budokan arena in Tokyo; documented on the succinctly titled "At Budokan," the concerts were filled with the sound of ten thousand Japanese fans stretched to the breaking point by their fervor. The crowd at the Megastore, clustered around a small stage in the sub-basement level, was the



Cheap Trick

same, give or take nine thousand eight hundred and fifty people. Most were in their mid-thirties or older; several wore T-shirts or hats from past Cheap Trick tours; and a few had toddlers on their shoulders.

After a few remarks from Eddie Trunk, of the classic-rock station Q104.3, Cheap Trick took the stage. In its heyday, the band had a sharply defined image that turned on the contrast between its two halves: Zander and Petersson were the pretty boys, the pinups; and Nielsen and Carlos were the cartoons, one a hyperactive schoolboy, the other a cigar-chomping lout. Time has made something of a mockery of these characters. Zander, the youngest member, is fifty; and Nielsen, who once leaped around the stage flinging guitar picks and making smart-aleck remarks, instead sat on a stool at stage left, where he could be a smart-aleck in relative comfort. “Sorry we’re late,” Nielsen said. “In a classic ‘Spinal Tap’ moment, we were trapped in the elevator for fifteen minutes.”

The band played a short acoustic set: two songs from its new album and two old songs, including a somewhat subdued rendition of its huge late-seventies hit “I Want You to Want Me.” Nielsen flicked picks with increasing frequency and talked up a storm between songs. “Tom is playing a bass that used to belong to Paul McCartney,” he said. “He had it restrung and turned into a right-handed bass, screwing up its value from a million dollars to something like two hundred dollars.”

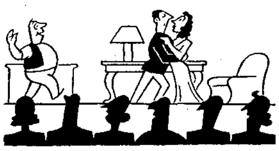
After the performance, fans had a chance to ask questions. They ranged from the picayune (“This one’s for Robin: Elvis or Frank?”) to the self-serving (“Rick, remember that show in Cleveland many years ago when you got a Phillies baseball cap? That was me”) and the academic (“When you mentioned KISS in ‘Surrender,’ am I right in assuming it was sarcastic, and, if so, was it taken that way at the time?”). A middle-aged man said, “I have no question—I just wanted to say thanks.” And a woman who identified herself as a singer asked Zander, “How do you switch from that sweet voice to those rawer vocals?”

“Well, I have a switch right here on my back,” Zander said, turning around and getting the evening’s biggest laugh.

By the time the gifts started to come—someone passed forward a sketch of Cheap Trick that Nielsen said looked like “Robin, Tom, Bun E., and that lady from the Brady Bunch”—the band’s enthusiasm had begun to flag. Flicking the last of his picks into the audience, and explaining that they had to catch a flight to Indianapolis for a radio show, Nielsen thanked Q104.3 for playing the new record, thanked everyone for coming, and led the band offstage.

—*Ben Greenman*

THE BOARDS
DEATH BY CRAB



Kyle Jarrow is twenty-three years old and bears a passing resemblance to Dennis the Menace. He is the kind of person who enjoys provoking people, and who can enlist a piano and a trumpet to get his point across loudly, if he wishes. His usual collaborator is an old Yale classmate, Alex Timbers, who runs a theatre company called Les Frères Corbusier. One project on their drawing board is a Scientology Christmas pageant that will star child actors and raise troubling questions about Gerhard Schröder’s Germany. At the moment, however, they are engrossed in a more urgent project: the enshrinement of August 2nd as a national day of mourning.

On that day in 1923, the dashing, dissolute President Warren Gamaliel Harding—the handsomest of all American Presidents, historians concur—died suddenly, in San Francisco. In the rock opera “President Harding Is a Rock Star” (now playing in SoHo), for which Jarrow wrote the music and the lyrics, and which Timbers directed, the twenty-ninth President is subjected to the “Behind the Music” treatment. In 1920, on his fifty-fifth birthday, Harding, a not very bright schoolteacher, newspaperman, and insurance salesman from Marion, Ohio, won the Presidency in a landslide. By his fifty-eighth birthday, he had reportedly staked and lost the White House china in a poker game, his cronies had used the nation’s naval oil reserves to line their own pockets (a scrape that became known as Teapot Dome), he had trysted with at least one young woman in the Oval Office, and, worse, he had died. Some say he contracted a fatal case of food poisoning after eating bad crab; others say he suffered a coronary embolism or an aneurysm; still others say he was poisoned by his wife, Flossie, who had had enough of his bad behavior. But, as Flossie did not permit an autopsy, this last theory is mere conjecture.

“The current thinking is, he had an aneurysm or a stroke,” says Robert Rupp, a Harding historian at West Virginia Wesleyan College and the creator of the 1993 documentary “The Front Porch President: Warren G. Harding.” “There were heart problems in his family, and, if you look at his face in photographs in the few weeks before he died, you can see that he looked terrible.”

Jarrow is unconvinced. His version of Harding’s demise combines two of the prevailing theories: Mrs. Harding intentionally poisoned her husband with bad crab. “Think about it,” he says. “A lot of historians said it was coronary thrombosis, but, for all I know, that’s the most common way that ptomaine poisoning ends up killing you! Come on! Flossie was alone with him when he died.”

The playwright and the professor may never be reconciled about the cause of Harding’s death, but the President’s reputation is improving. To mark the eightieth anniversary of the death, Rupp will hold a symposium in Harding’s home town this month. Meanwhile, in SoHo, Kyle Jarrow and his crew will celebrate the anniversary by offering their audience a crab buffet. “We will serve the pre-plucked crab that you buy in plastic containers; we’ll lay it out on garnish,” he said. “My feeling is there’s something grotesque, in a good way, about eating naked crab before going into a musical in which you watch somebody die eating crab.” In the play, Flossie Harding darts in and out, spoon-feeding her husband white, puffy chunks of crab that are actually wadded up pieces of wet white bread. (“We wanted to use real crab, but it was disgusting. He couldn’t perform with the crab taste in his mouth,” Jarrow said.) Toward the end, a giant crab draws the President into a crustacean danse macabre. “I feel sure it’s the crab that got Harding,” Jarrow said. “And, honestly, the image of an American President being chased around the stage by a giant crab is very symbolic in the way that an aneurysm isn’t.”

—*Liesl Schillinger*

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
OPEN WIDE

In August, 1975, the critic Stephen Farber, writing in the *Times*, attributed the success of "Jaws"—which in just two months had become one of the most popular films in history—to an "aggressive media blitz" that had "pummeled" moviegoers into submission and into theatres. While Hollywood had traditionally "platformed" its movies, starting them out in a few theatres and then gradually adding more in the course of weeks or months, "Jaws" opened on more than four hundred screens across the country, a wider release than any previous film had had. There was also a nationwide prime-time television ad campaign—one of the biggest ever for a movie. The upshot, Farber suggested, was that moviegoers were manipulated into seeing the film. "Audiences who think they made 'Jaws' a success are pitifully naïve about the mass media," he wrote.

This was exactly what Hollywood wanted to believe, since it meant that there might be a formula for building a blockbuster. If you gave a movie a big enough push out of the gate, its momentum would keep it going. You could start what economists call a "non-informative information cascade," where people would go to the movie simply because everyone else was going. Take a high concept, add a hefty marketing budget and a wide release, and you have yourself a hit. Two decades later, the "Jaws" formula rules. Nearly every weekend this summer has brought a blockbuster opening supported by tens of millions of dollars in ad spending. Now the big Hollywood movies—"Spider-Man," "X2: X-Men United," "The Matrix: Reloaded"—open on more than seven thousand screens.

And yet hits like "Jaws" are no easier to come by. More often, would-be blockbusters perform as they have this summer: they open big but get small fast. "The Matrix: Reloaded" took in $91.7 million in its opening weekend, but two weekends later made just $15.6 million. "X2" earned $85.6 million in its first weekend but less than half that a week later. And "The Hulk" saw its box-office plummet seventy per cent in its second weekend. In 1993, the top ten movies earned around half of their total revenue in their first three weeks. These days, the top ten earn three-quarters of their revenue in that time. Movies disappear faster, too. "The Hulk" opened in almost four thousand theatres. After five weeks, it was playing in fewer than six hundred. Think of this as platforming in reverse.

Does that mean that the "Jaws" formula no longer applies? Actually, it never did. "Jaws" may have opened big because Universal marketed it well and released it widely, but it stayed big because people liked it. And controlling what people like is something that even the most clever marketer can't do. For all the money and energy that studio executives invest in trying to build blockbusters, William Goldman's famous Hollywood precept—"Nobody knows anything"—still holds true. A few years ago, the economists Arthur De Vany and W. David Walls did a detailed study of two thousand movies and concluded, "Revenue forecasts have zero precision. In other words, 'Anything can happen.' " A big budget and a few high-profile stars may increase a film's chance of success slightly, De Vany and Walls found, but not enough to make the investment worthwhile. The only real determinant of long-run success, it turns out, is word of mouth. Ultimately, as De Vany and Walls write, "after a movie opens, the audience decides its fate."

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The exception to the rule of the masses is, of course, the opening weekend. The real lesson of "Jaws" was that if you market a film well and make sure that it's shown on thousands of screens, you can be reasonably assured of a big opening. (This summer, for instance, nearly every high-profile studio film has had a respectable début.) The marketing blitz and the wide release work on the opening weekend because they're a form of what economists call "signalling." A movie that hasn't opened yet is a classic example of an "experience good." You can't tell if it's worth seeing without seeing it ("The Adventures of Pluto Nash" might be an exception), so you look for early signals, which Hollywood is happy to provide: a clever trailer, a big ad budget, a wide release. You're supposed to think that a studio wouldn't spend so much or put a film on so many screens unless it was confident that it could recoup its investment, and therefore the movie must be worth your ten bucks. Signalling, though, works only as long as the experience good has not been experienced. Once people start talking and reviewers get griping, the ads don't much matter. That's why studios spend almost their entire marketing budget before a movie opens.

The opening-weekend obsession has prompted a lot of hand-wringing in the film industry, as well as criticism in the press. But in fact it's a rare case of Hollywood doing something sensible. A big opening crowds out competition by putting a movie on thousands of screens. It minimizes the risk of a total flop, since it guarantees at least one good weekend. And it maximizes revenue, too. If a movie opens strongly, the studio gets to keep ninety per cent of the box-office. (The theatre takes the rest, along with a sum to cover the "house nut.") The longer a movie plays, the smaller the studio's cut gets. In other words, the studios want movies to make money as fast as possible. A movie that makes $120 million in three weeks can be more lucrative than one that makes $200 million in three months.

This doesn't mean that the studios want to make movies that disappear quickly. Everyone's hoping for another "Spider-Man." But, until one comes along, getting rich quick and getting out fast will have to do. Goldman's dictum may need a slight modification: Nobody knows anything—except how to open big.

—*James Surowiecki*

LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

THE SEARCH FOR OSAMA

Did the government let bin Laden's trail go cold?

BY JANE MAYER

One day this past March, in Langley, Virginia, there was jubilation on a little-known thoroughfare called Bin Laden Lane. Analysts at the C.I.A.'s Counter-Terrorism Center, a dingy warren of gray metal desks marked by a custom-made street sign, were thrilled to learn that, seven thousand miles away, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, colleagues from the agency had helped local authorities storm a private villa and capture Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the man believed to be the third most important figure in the Al Qaeda terrorist organization.

At last, the stalled hunt for Al Qaeda fugitives had gained momentum. The authorities in Pakistan had obtained Mohammed's laptop computer and satellite phone; this breakthrough, they hoped, would help them track down the organization's leader, Osama bin Laden. Analysts in Washington speculated that news of Mohammed's capture might even prompt bin Laden into fleeing his current hideout. According to an F.B.I. official, in the weeks before his arrest Mohammed had been moving from one place to another in Baluchistan, a lawless province that borders Afghanistan and Iran. Bin Laden, it was thought, was probably in the same area.

Days later, American intelligence satellites traced a telephone call made to Baluchistan by Saad bin Laden, one of Osama's sons, who was thought to be hiding in Iran. Intelligence officials knew that bin Laden no longer dared to answer the phone, but they believed the call might have been placed to one of his aides.

An unmanned spy plane dispatched to the region spotted a suspicious convoy moving at night. It consisted of about a hundred people on horseback and on foot, and was advancing along an ancient smugglers' route, in a rocky desert area. Bin Laden, the officials hoped, might be travelling with this group.

A team made up of C.I.A. paramilitary operatives, Delta Force soldiers, and Pakistani officials descended upon the convoy. Meanwhile, in Washington, the C.I.A. had orders to launch a Hellfire missile from an unmanned Predator intelligence aircraft if the presence of bin Laden could be confirmed. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, President Bush signed a top-secret Memorandum of Notification, calling for bin Laden to be either captured or killed on sight.

"The C.I.A. was very confident—they thought they had him there in Baluchistan, across from the Iranian border," Vincent Cannistraro, a former chief of operations for the C.I.A.'s Counter-Terrorism Center, said. "They had a fixed location on him. They mounted a moderate-sized operation." The convoy was intercepted, Cannistraro said. Each traveller was examined. "Lo and behold, bin Laden wasn't there," he said. The convoy was merely a group of refugees.

Instead of firing a Hellfire missile, American aircraft dropped flyers that featured an image of bin Laden's face behind bars. The flyers also publicized a twenty-five-million-dollar reward that would be given to anyone who could hand bin Laden over to the authorities.

Iranian officials issued a statement denying that bin Laden's son was in their country. (Iran has maintained this position, despite numerous reports to the contrary.) American officials declined to acknowledge the incident at all.

Soon after this episode, I visited the office of Cofer Black, a veteran of the C.I.A. whom President Bush appointed last year to be the State Department's coördinator for counter-terrorism. If Black was disappointed about the failure to find bin Laden, he did not betray it. He leaned forward across the coffee table separating us and said emphatically, "The guy's a goner. The only question is whether he'll be arrested in

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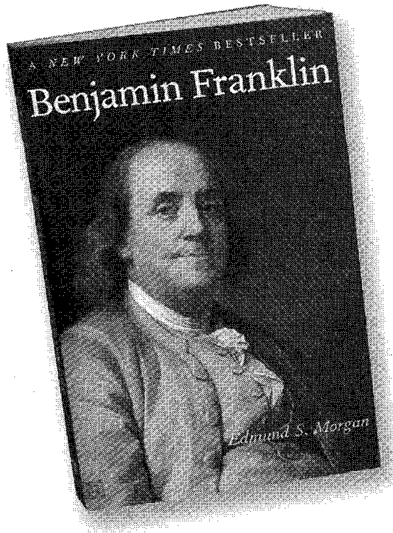

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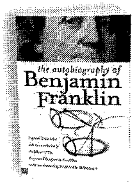

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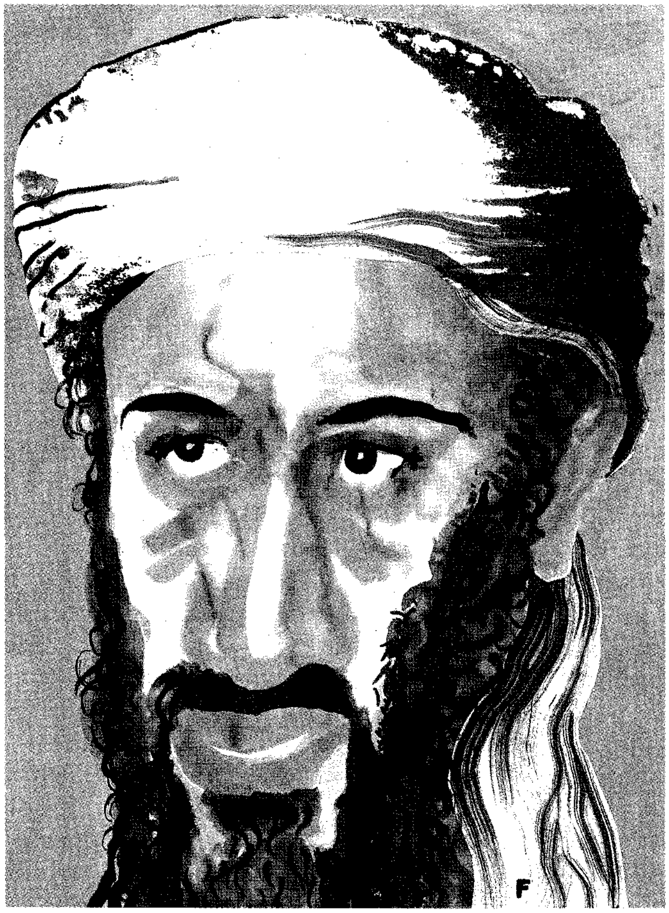
cuffs or taken dead. He deserves to die."

If bin Laden was killed, Black continued, the world would demand proof. "You'd need some DNA," he said. "There's a good way to do it. Take a machete, and whack off his head, and you'll get a bucketful of DNA, so you can see it and test it. It beats lugging the whole body back!"

Tough talk and aggressive military action have been hallmarks of the Bush Administration's war on terrorism. In the wake of the attacks on New York and Washington, President Bush made it clear that he was targeting bin Laden; in one speech, he declared that the terrorist was "wanted, dead or alive." In another speech, Bush said, "If he thinks he can hide and run from the United States and our allies, he will be sorely mistaken." However, as months went by without a successful capture—"point" targets, as individuals are called by military tacticians, are notoriously elusive—Bush rarely mentioned bin Laden's name in public. The Administration's attention shifted to building support for the war in Iraq, and Saddam Hussein seemed to replace bin Laden in the role of the world's most notorious "evildoer." Indeed, Bush's reticence on the subject of bin Laden grew so conspicuous that critics, such as the Democratic Presidential candidate Bob Graham, began referring to the terrorist as "Osama bin Forgotten."

In June, at a joint press conference at Camp David with President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, the President was forced to address the bin Laden question. A reporter asked where bin Laden might be, and Bush's response was muted and cautious. "If Osama bin Laden is alive . . . slowly but surely we're dismantling the networks, and we'll continue on the hunt," he said. He added that locating bin Laden "could take years."

Al Qaeda is clearly good at finding hiding places. The *Times* recently reported that, after a shoot-out in the mountains of Afghanistan in January, American soldiers were amazed to find a kitchen big enough to feed forty people, complete with a cow, several donkeys, and a larder, hidden behind a false wall in a cave. Searching bin Laden's cave network in Tora Bora, in the White Mountains, analysts have found artillery, tank parts, and computers.



Bin Laden's followers get messages "all the time," an official says.

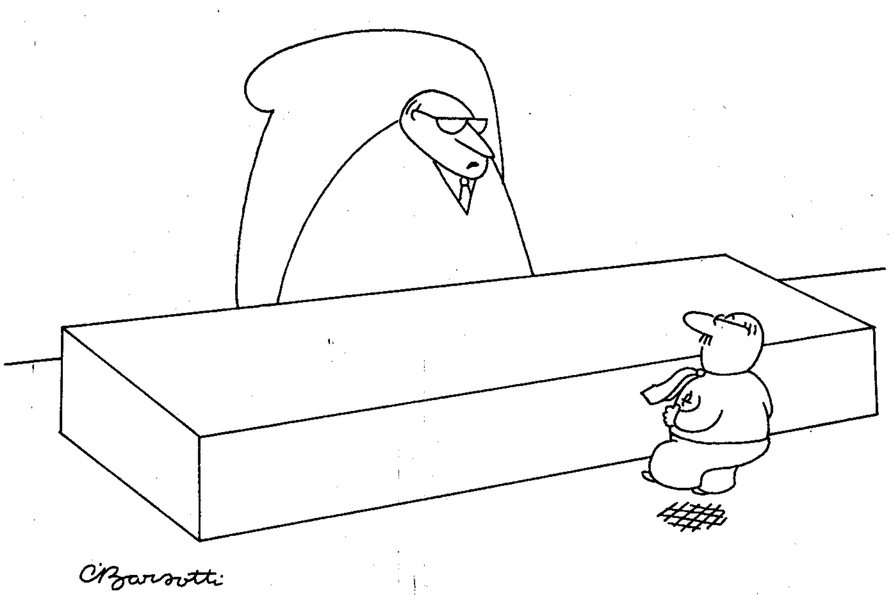
FILIP PAGOWSKI

The working theory of the C.I.A., and also of foreign intelligence services, is that bin Laden is most likely hiding somewhere along the fifteen-hundred-mile border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. "If he is protected by a big group, I think bin Laden is on the Afghan side of the border," Musharraf told *Le Monde* in July. "If his group has less than ten people, he could be on the Pakistan side." Some people familiar with the region claim that bin Laden's whereabouts can be narrowed even further. Mansoor Ijaz is an American financier with family members in Pakistan who are connected with intelligence circles there. A New York-based investment company he owns, Crescent Investment Management, has ties to the international intelligence community through James Woolsey, a former director of the C.I.A., who serves on the company's board. Ijaz recently returned from a trip to Pakistan. In an interview, he contended that bin Laden was "very much alive, and hiding in the tribal areas"—that is, in the borderlands dominated by ethnic Pashtuns. Ijaz said that, during his trip, he spoke with top intelligence figures in the region. "Bin Laden is travelling around within about a hundred-and-fifty-mile diameter," he said. "He's essentially being baby-sat by tribal leaders who have an arm's-length relationship with the Pakistani government. The tribal leaders have said he can't move except at night, and he can't communicate by phone, radio, or walkie-talkie. He knows it is too dangerous. They have constructed a perfect spider's web of communication." Ijaz said he had been told that bin Laden communicated via "handwritten notes" transmitted by "a human chain-link fence," because word of mouth had proved unreliable. "Some of his messages were not being correctly communicated," he said.

Ijaz said he'd been told that bin Laden was surrounded by concentric circles of security: an outer ring of loyal villagers, a second ring of tribal leaders, and an inner ring of personal aides and bodyguards. "Since he's surrounded by devout followers, there's virtually no chance of the U.S. being able to pinpoint him," he said.

Rahimullah Yusufzai, a journalist in Peshawar who is known for his interviews with bin Laden, and who has maintained access to Al Qaeda sympathizers, also told me that bin Laden was likely hiding in western Pakistan. He said that bin Laden's bodyguards, who are assumed to include as many as five of his sons, have vowed to "martyr" their father rather than allow him to be taken alive.

Although bin Laden is believed to have had hundreds of soldiers with him when he escaped to the tribal areas



"The point is, Hutchens, a younger man could jump higher."

after the American bombardment of Afghanistan, most experts think that he is now nearly alone. He is said, however, to keep in touch with his inner circle. This spring, the Washington *Post* reported that bin Laden had been spotted in the tribal areas with his closest co-conspirator, Ayman Zawahiri. (Rumors that Zawahiri has been captured by authorities in Iran have been discounted by U.S. officials.) Dominic Simpson, the head of the Middle East division of Kroll, a New York-based security firm, told me that a reliable source had shared details about a recent meeting inside Pakistan which was attended by Mullah Mohammed Omar, the fugitive leader of the Taliban. Simpson said that during the meeting Omar confided, "Yes, I am with Osama. We're travelling together in Pakistan."

Such shreds of information, of course, are no more than informed conjecture. Bin Laden has not been seen publicly since December 26, 2001, when he appeared in a videotape that was released to celebrate the three-month anniversary of what he called "the blessed attack." Instead of seeming joyous, the forty-six-year-old terrorist looked sickly and aged. After a month passed by without another videotape, some experts began thinking that bin Laden was dead. Then came a stream of audio recordings, faxes, Internet postings, and other communications, all asserting, or implying, that bin Laden was alive.

Last spring, bin Laden reportedly sent a handwritten letter to his mother that said, "I am in good health and in a very, very safe place. They will not get me unless Allah wills it." Another letter apparently from bin Laden, written in longhand approximately six months ago, was found on the body of a suspected Al Qaeda operative who was killed by Saudi police in May. According to *Al Watan,* an Arabic daily, the letter offered season's greetings on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, a major Muslim holiday, and noted the "achievements of the Al Qaeda cells." (A bloodstain obliterated the name of the letter's recipient.)

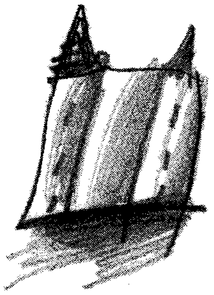
"He's sending tapes and messages to his followers all the time, with instructions that could not have come from anyone else," Yossef Bodansky, the director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare, told me recently. "They're things like condolences to families of Islamic luminaries who have died," he said. "People from the Philippines to Indonesia to South America ask bin Laden questions, and they get answers from him." Bodansky was struck by the meditative tone of the letters. "They are written with a tremendous amount of peace of mind. There are no mistakes. He is not a guy on the run."

Terrorism experts have pored over several audiotaped messages purporting to have come from bin Laden since September 11th. Analysis of voice patterns and syntax suggests that these messages are authentic. Specialists have tried to explain why bin Laden stopped videotaping himself. "He seemed possibly injured on his left side in the last videotape," Matthew Levitt, a former F.B.I. anti-terrorism specialist, told me. Others have noted that, although bin Laden is left-handed, in his last video he perched his Kalashnikov rifle next to his right side. He also failed to gesticulate as much as he usually did when he spoke. In the past, when bin Laden was ill he avoided being photographed, evidently careful never to project a weakened image.

Even if bin Laden is impaired, to many experts, he still appears to be playing a direct role in coördinating Al Qaeda's campaign of terrorism. In February, three months before the wave of bombings in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, a tape was released on which a voice thought to be bin Laden's ordered "martyrdom operations" on all three targets. Similarly, last October bin Laden released a tape calling on infidels to convert or face dire consequences. Two senior Al Qaeda operatives captured by authorities, Abu Zubaydah and Ramzi bin al-Shibh, warned American interrogators that the wording was definitely bin Laden's, and that his last-minute call for conversion was an attempt to fashion himself in the image of Muhammad. The prisoners interpreted these signs as an attempt to rationalize an imminent act of violence. Within days, more than two hundred people had been murdered in Kuwait and Bali.

Indeed, the most difficult problem for American officials who are trying to find bin Laden may be determining who his helpers are and how they fit into Pakistan's power structure. "The reason bin Laden is so hard to get is that people are helping him," Cofer Black told me. The search has been stymied not so much by tactical or logistical hurdles as by political ones. The tribal regions of Pakistan are impoverished and increasingly fundamentalist, and there is ambivalence within Musharraf's government about how vigorously to press in the fight against Muslim jihadis. Although Musharraf has been an outspoken ally of the United States, the aggressive pursuit of bin Laden poses political risks for him, since it is sure to incite his regime's fundamentalist opponents. Some skeptics argue that the capture of bin Laden may not be in Musharraf's interest for other reasons as well. As long as bin Laden and other top figures in Al Qaeda are believed to be on the lam in Pakistan, they say, Musharraf can be assured of receiving favorable treatment from the United States in exchange for his coöperation. Since September 11th, Pakistan has been rescued from the verge of bankruptcy. The United States lifted economic sanctions that were imposed in 1998, after Pakistan began testing nuclear weapons, and it restored foreign aid, last month promising a five-year package of three billion dollars in return for Pakistan's continued help in the fight against terrorism. "Essentially, Musharraf was very lucky this happened in his neighborhood," Yusufzai told me.

The official position of the Bush Administration is that Musharraf's government is working as hard as it can to rout out terrorists in Pakistan. "The Pakistani government under Musharraf is a strong and key player in the global war on terrorism, and their contribution has been second to none," Cofer Black told me. More than twenty-five Pakistani security officers have been killed helping the United States capture an estimated four hundred and eighty Al Qaeda members and sympathizers. (Globally, a third of the Al Qaeda leadership is thought to have been captured or killed.) "When there have been arrests of terrorists to be made, the Pakistanis have been the first ones through the door," Milton Bearden, a former C.I.A. field officer, said.

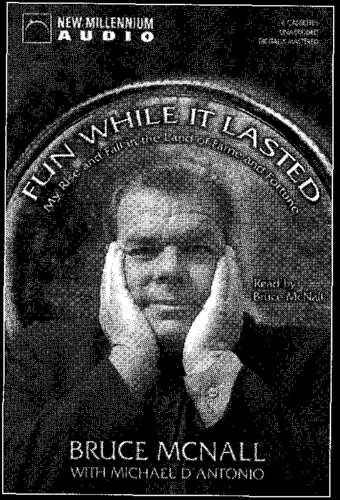


Nevertheless, the United States and Pakistan have never completely agreed on which militant Muslim groups qualify as terrorist organizations. In particular, rounding up members of the Taliban has been a sticking point for Pakistan's intelligence service, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, or I.S.I. According to Jessica Stern, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School, the I.S.I. is like "an unreconstructed K.G.B." The Taliban was virtually created by the I.S.I., which wanted to insure that a friendly government took over in Afghanistan after the Soviet war. "If you think about how Pakistan views Afghanistan, then it's no surprise that it supported the Taliban," Roger Cressey, a former director for Trans-National Threats on the National Security Council, told me. "The Taliban provided strategic depth to Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistan political game. Without Pakistani support, the Taliban would have been a bunch of frustrated students of the Koran sitting in coffeehouses."

Officially, the Musharraf government severed ties with the Taliban two years ago, after the Bush Administration made clear that any country harboring terrorists would be viewed as a legitimate target. But the question of conflicting loyalties persists. After September 11th, the United States pressured Pakistan to dismiss the head of the I.S.I., Lieutenant General Mahmood Ahmed, who was seen as being too close to the Taliban. (He was fired, but has since resurfaced in Pakistan as the head of a subsidiary of a prominent business consortium, a position that required government backing.) According to terrorism experts, lower-level I.S.I. officials remain sympathetic to the Taliban, particularly in the predominantly Pashtun tribal regions where many of the Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters are thought to have fled.

Fundamentalists have been gaining power throughout western Pakistan in recent years. Last October, voters in the North-West Frontier Province, a Pashtun region, chose to be governed by a coalition of six fundamentalist religious parties known as the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal, or M.M.A., which constitutes the main political opposition to Musharraf. Last month, the province adopted the orthodox code of Islamic law, Sharia, banning everything from coeducation and television to the wearing of white socks and noisy shoes by women. (These sartorial options were deemed too titillating.) In the province, a top Pakistani diplomat admitted to me, "The Taliban are local heroes."

An American official who attended recent private meetings between Amer-



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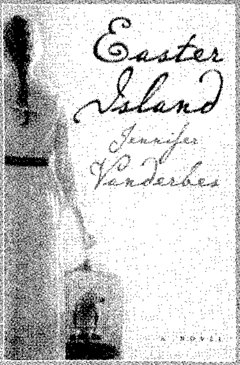

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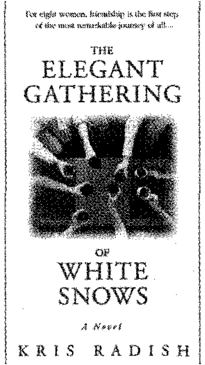
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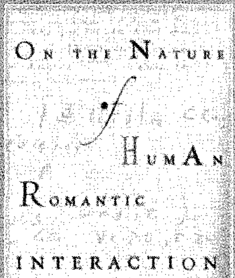

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—Charles Baxter, author of *The Feast of Love*

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ican policymakers and leaders of the I.S.I. told me that the Pakistani officials tried to draw clear distinctions between the Taliban and Al Qaeda. But the two groups are historically intertwined. Between 1996 and 2001, bin Laden personally subsidized the Taliban, as he is now suspected of subsidizing Pakistan's tribal chiefs. The Taliban's leader, Mullah Omar, is married to one of bin Laden's daughters.

"If you're harboring one lot, it's hard to go after the others," Ahmed Rashid, the author of a best-selling book on the Taliban and a prominent Pakistani journalist, told me. "There's lots of sympathy for the Taliban even among the military forces and intelligence agencies." Rashid said he doubted that there was similar sympathy for Al Qaeda, but he added, "People tend to forget that Al Qaeda has been working in Pakistan for the last two decades, most emphatically since 1996. There was an enormous network here of supporters and safe houses before 9/11."

Shaheen Sehbai is a Pakistani journalist who, until last year, edited the *News*, the largest English-language newspaper in Pakistan. I asked him about efforts by I.S.I. officials to find bin Laden. "I question how hard they're trying," he said. "I think they're not looking very hard, because he'll always remain a bargaining chip." Sehbai attended college in Peshawar, the capital of the North-West Frontier Province. He speaks Pashto, the local dialect, and said, "I know that area like the back of my hand." He rejects the prevailing argument in Islamabad that the Musharraf government cannot do more because the region is beyond the reach of its laws. "Every tribal chief is in the pocket of the government in Pakistan," he said. "The tribal areas are divided into agencies, and each has an administrator, who is part of the Pakistani civil service." Tribal leaders rarely defy these federal administrators, he said. He has seen suspected murderers and high-profile kidnappers flee into the tribal areas, only to be turned over by the chiefs to local authorities within days. "There would be more resistance in bin Laden's case, because of ideological sympathy," Sehbai acknowledged. "But if the government seriously wanted him they'd know where he is, and under whose protection. In the past, the Army has laid siege to villages and burned them to the ground. I've heard of no such operations with bin Laden."

In America, too, the vigor of Pakistan's efforts has come into doubt. "Bin Laden is their Get Out of Jail Free card," Yossef Bodansky said. "Every time we complain about the heroin production, they say, 'Look, we're helping you with bin Laden,' and we backpedal. When we complain about Pakistan sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir, they invoke bin Laden, and we backpedal. 'We're on your side,' they say. But I think there's strong evidence that Pakistan is shielding him." Bodansky also charged that the Pakistanis have produced major Al Qaeda members only when it served their own political purposes.

Asad Hayauddin, a spokesman at the Pakistani Embassy in Washington, dismissed Bodansky's views. "There are always going to be doubting Thomases," he said. "The F.B.I. has been after the Mafia for eighty years—does that mean they're on the take?" Of the difficulties involved in finding bin Laden, Hayauddin said, "It's not a question of will—it's a question of terrain."

Unsurprisingly, no one is more cynical about the Pakistanis than the Indians. Their intelligence service has devoted considerable energy to discovering links between Al Qaeda and Pakistani extremist groups that oppose India's presence in Kashmir. (Bin Laden has championed the cause of Kashmiri independence.) Many of the Pakistani groups, the Indians say, have received covert support from the country's military and intelligence apparatus. An Indian intelligence official emphasized that Abu Zubaydah, a Saudi-born Palestinian who had assumed one of the highest posts in Al Qaeda's chain of command, was found in the northeast city of Faisalabad, in a villa owned by a Pakistani jihadi organization called Lashkar-e-Taiba. In addition, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, whose family is from Baluchistan, was found in March living with a member of the Jamaat-e-Islami Party—part of the militant coalition that Musharraf lost ground to in the last election. The safe house was in Rawalpindi, a well-heeled town outside Islamabad that is home to much of Pakistan's military.

Indeed, the villa is a quick walk from Musharraf's own house, and its back yard faces a military training ground.

Pakistan has barred the United States from playing more than a token military role in the country. Robert Oakley, a former Ambassador to Pakistan, told me that the Pakistanis have countenanced a few American military advisers, and accepted intelligence help from the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. Pakistan also allows the United States to conduct overflights and provide logistical help. Small teams of special-ops forces have occasionally offered assistance. But Oakley said that Pakistan has resisted offers to send troops. After September 11th, he told me, "the U.S. military said, 'Maybe we can help?' But Pakistan said, 'No, you'll get us all killed!' "

Asad Hayauddin confirmed that a United States military presence in the tribal areas "would be very unwelcome. There is great resistance to the idea of foreign occupation of any sort." He added, "You have to deal with this area politically, not militarily. That's why the U.S. is having such problems. They don't have an anthropological approach to world problems. If you take an armored personnel carrier, or a helicopter gunship, you kill innocent people. Then you've lost that village for a hundred years. These places run on revenge."

The Pakistani government has tried to advance this argument in Washington, encouraging a less confrontational strategy in the tribal regions. In December, 2001, according to several knowledgeable sources, Musharraf met with Wendy Chamberlin, then the American Ambassador to Pakistan, and asked for American support in helping him extend his control over the tribal areas. He argued that, unless the borders were cauterized there, the flow of fighters from Afghanistan would be impossible to stop. Musharraf told Chamberlin that the local Pashtun people could be bought off with basic government services that their tribal leaders had never provided—such as schools, clinics, roads, and water. Large cash awards could be offered to locals who helped track down fugitive Arabs.

"How much do you need?" Chamberlin asked. Musharraf's answer was forty million dollars.

Chamberlin told Musharraf that she would back his plan. But when her funding request reached Congress, it was derailed. Charlie Flickner, the powerful Republican clerk of the foreign-operations subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, felt that the expenditure was a waste of money. He had travelled to western Pakistan, and concluded that the tribal areas were essentially sinkholes. On his recommendation, Chamberlin's proposal was rejected. Instead, the committee agreed to give fourteen million dollars to the tribal areas, in the form of law-enforcement assistance to the local constabularies.

"It's not something you throw money at," Flickner told me. "It's the typical thing that the bureaucrats in Islamabad think of. I don't think everything in the world is susceptible to American money." Members of the Democratic minority on the committee refused to respond to questions on the record. One Democrat, however, told me, "We blew it. There was a window of opportunity, but we lost it by not funding them adequately." Soon after Chamberlin's proposal was dismissed, the North-West Frontier Province fell into the hands of Musharraf's Islamist opponents; in the tribal areas, fundamentalists further expanded their influence.

Musharraf, during his visit to America last month, stressed that, for the first time since the nation's founding, in 1947, Pakistan has begun deploying thousands of soldiers in the tribal areas. The United States recently donated five Huey-2 helicopters and three fixed-wing Cessna surveillance aircraft to help the Pakistani government monitor the province—officially, to further efforts to control poppy production there. Ahmed Rashid isn't impressed. He has been to the border region in recent weeks, and was struck by the weakness of the Pakistani military effort. "The troops are just sitting there at the border—they're not doing sweeps," he said, adding that the security situation in the borderlands was getting worse. "The Taliban's really reasserted itself. Hundreds of Taliban fighters have been crossing the borders and attacking American troops. Al Qaeda commanders are helping the Taliban in the background, supplying funds and logistical support. Al Qaeda's also providing reward money for captured or killed American soldiers." The sums offered, he said, ranged up to a hundred thousand dollars. "All the Americans are complaining about the lack of support from the Pakistani military," Rashid said. "The soldiers on the ground think the Pakistanis are allowing the Taliban to operate."

To the frustration of many of the people involved in the fight against Al Qaeda, the Bush Administration is said to have been distracted by competing priorities—most notably, the war in Iraq. Rohan Gunaratna, a Sri Lankan terrorism expert who has analyzed thousands of Al Qaeda documents recovered by various governments, said, "I feel that if they had not gone to Iraq they would have found Osama by now. The best people were moved away from this operation. The best minds were moved to Iraq. It's a great shame. It's the biggest military failure in the war on terrorism so far. The Americans need more resources, and more high-level people exclusively assigned to this task."

Supporters of the Iraq war suggest that this view overlooks longer-term benefits that have yet to be fully appreciated. Ambassador Oakley, for example, said, "I think the war in Iraq has made governments much more cautious about allowing terrorists into their countries—Iran and Syria, for instance—because they can see the consequences to themselves from the U.S."

Many intelligence insiders, however, shared Gunaratna's concerns. Cannistraro, the former C.I.A. official, said that the effort to find bin Laden had "lost at least half of its original strength." He added, "Arabic speakers are in short supply. You still have some intelligence-collection assets in Afghanistan, but mostly it's just small teams looking for signals. That's because of Iraq."

Rand Beers, who until March handled terrorism issues for the National Security Council, told me he had become so concerned about the impact that the war in Iraq was having on the war on terrorism that he quit his job—at the height of the American invasion. Beers, who served on the N.S.C. under Ronald Reagan and both Presidents Bush, is now an adviser for the Presidential campaign of the Democratic Senator John Kerry. He told me, "I have worried for some time that it became politically inconvenient" for the Bush Administration to "complete operations sufficiently in Afghanistan."

Last February, he said, on the eve of

the bombing of Baghdad, the Bush Administration peremptorily drafted an announcement declaring that in Afghanistan the military was moving to "stability operations," a euphemism for military de-escalation. "They wanted to make it sound as if there were just a few more stitches needed in the quilt," he said. At the time, in fact, Beers believed that the security situation in Afghanistan was so unstable that Al Qaeda might reconstitute itself there. For instance, a recent U.N. report found that the average number of attacks per month on coalition forces rose from around nine last year to more than thirty since the beginning of 2003.

The Administration, Beers said, ignored such concerns. "They didn't want to call attention to the fact that Osama was still at large and living along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, because they wanted it to look like the only front was Iraq," he said. "Otherwise, the question becomes: If Afghanistan is that bad, why start another war?"

Richard Clarke, the country's first counter-terrorism czar, told me in an interview at his home in Arlington, Virginia, that he wasn't particularly surprised that the Bush Administration's efforts to find bin Laden had been stymied by political problems. He had seen such efforts fail before. Clarke, who retired from public service in February and is now a private consultant on security matters, has served every President since Ronald Reagan. He has won a reputation as a tireless advocate for action against Al Qaeda. Clarke emphasized that the C.I.A. director, George Tenet, President Bush, and, before him, President Clinton were all deeply committed to stopping bin Laden; nonetheless, Clarke said, their best efforts had been doomed by bureaucratic clashes, caution, and incessant problems with Pakistan.

In the course of several hours, Clarke revealed details of previous intelligence failures that had allowed bin Laden to escape, many of which the Bush Administration continues to classify as top secret. These details were withheld from the Congressional Report on September 11th; according to an official familiar with the report, they were censored from the section "Covert Action and Military Operations Against Bin Laden."

Clarke told me that in the mid-nineties "the C.I.A. was authorized to mount operations to go into Afghanistan and apprehend bin Laden." President Clinton, Clarke said, "was really gung-ho" about the scenario. "He had no hesitations," he said. "But the C.I.A. had hesitations. They didn't want their own people killed. And they didn't want their shortcomings exposed. They really didn't have the paramilitary capability to do it; they could not stage a snatch operation." Instead of trying to mount the operation themselves, Clarke said, "the C.I.A. basically paid a bunch of local Afghans, who went in and did nothing."

"I'd be fun, too, if you had her money."

In 1998, Al Qaeda struck the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing more than two hundred people. In retaliation, Clinton signed a secret Presidential finding authorizing the C.I.A. to kill bin Laden. It was the first directive of this kind that Clarke had seen during his thirty years in government. Soon afterward, he told me, C.I.A. officials went to the White House and said they had "specific, predictive, actionable" intelligence that bin Laden would soon be attending a particular meeting, in a particular place. "It was a rare occurrence," Clarke said. Clinton authorized a lethal attack. The target date, however—August 20, 1998—nearly coincided with Clinton's deposition about his affair with Monica Lewinsky. Clarke said that he and other top national-security officials at the White House went to see Clinton to warn him that he would likely be accused of "wagging the dog" in order to distract the public from his political embarrassment. Clinton was enraged. "Don't you fucking tell me about my political problems, or my personal problems," Clinton said, according to Clarke. "You tell me about national security. Is it the right thing to do?" Clarke thought it was. "Then fucking do it," Clinton told him.

The attacks, which cost seventy-nine million dollars and involved some sixty satellite-guided Tomahawk cruise missiles, obliterated two targets—a terrorist training camp outside Khost, in Afghanistan, and a pharmaceutical plant thought to be manufacturing chemical weapons in Khartoum, Sudan—and were notorious failures. "The best post-facto intelligence we had was that bin Laden had left the training camp within an hour of the attack," Clarke said. What went wrong? "I have reason to believe that a retired head of the I.S.I. was able to pass information along to Al Qaeda that an attack was coming," he said.

Clarke also blames the military for enabling the Pakistanis to compromise the mission. "The Pentagon did what we asked them not to," he said. "We asked them not to use surface ships. We asked them to use subs, so they wouldn't signal the attack. But not only did they use surface ships—they brought additional ones in, because every captain wants to be able to say he fired the cruise missile."

Asad Hayauddin denies that anyone in Pakistan even had enough knowledge to compromise the mission: "The U.S. didn't tell us about it until forty-five minutes before the missiles hit."

After the 1998 fiasco, Clinton secretly approved additional Presidential findings, authorizing the killing not just of bin Laden but also of several of his top lieutenants, and permitting any private planes or helicopters carrying them to be shot down. These directives led to nothing. "The C.I.A. was unable to carry out the mission," Clarke said. "They hired local Afghans to do it for them again." The agency also tried to train and equip a Pakistani commando force and some Uzbeks, too. "The point is, they were risk-averse," he said. Tenet was "eager to kill bin Laden," Clarke said. "He understood the threat. But the capability of the C.I.A.'s Directorate of Operations was far less than advertised. The Directorate of Operations would like people to think it's a great James Bond operation, but for years it essentially assigned officers undercover as diplomats to attend cocktail parties. They collected information. But they were not a commando unit that could go into Afghanistan and kill bin Laden."

"That's bullshit," a senior intelligence official said. "Risk-taking depends on political will allowing you to take the risk. It wasn't until after September 11th that people wanted the gloves to come off."

But Clarke said that in October, 2000, when the U.S.S. Cole was bombed, off the coast of Yemen, Clinton demanded better military options. The Department of Defense prepared a plan for a United States military operation so big that it was dismissed as politically untenable; meanwhile, General Hugh Shelton, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, concluded that, without better intelligence, a smaller-scale attack would be too risky. (Indeed, according to the Congressional Report on September 11th, Shelton said, "You can develop military operations until hell freezes over, but they are worthless without intelligence.") The Navy tried stationing two submarines in the Indian Ocean, in the hope of being able to shoot missiles at bin Laden, but the time lag between the sighting of the target and the arrival of the missiles made it virtually impossible to pinpoint him accurately.

The first promise of an intelligence breakthrough came in the fall of 2000, when Clarke, and a few allies in the C.I.A. and the military, recognized the potential of the Predator, a nine-hundred-and-fifty-pound unmanned propeller plane being tested by General Johnny Jumper, the Air Force's head of air combat at the time. It could supply live video surveillance—day or night, and through cloud cover. Clarke said that the plane, which was tested in Afghanistan, supplied "spectacular" pictures of suspected Al Qaeda terrorists, including one of a tall, white-robed man who closely resembled bin Laden and was surrounded by security guards as he crossed a city street to a mosque. At the C.I.A.'s Global Response Center, analysts who were used to receiving fuzzy satellite photographs and thirdhand reports were now able to watch as live video feeds captured the daily routines inside Al Qaeda training camps. They watched as men did physical exercises, fired their weapons, and practiced hand-to-hand combat. Two or three times that fall, intelligence analysts thought they might have spotted bin Laden himself. The man in question was unusually tall, like bin Laden, and drove the same model of truck that bin Laden preferred, the Toyota Land Cruiser. (The images weren't clear enough, however, to allow analysts to discern facial features.) The C.I.A. rushed the surveillance tapes over to the White House, where the President, like everyone else, was stunned by their clarity. Later that fall, however, fierce winds in the Hindu Kush caused the Predator to crash. The accident led to recriminations inside the C.I.A. and the Air Force and quarrels about which part of the bureaucracy should pay for the damage.

By early 2001, Clarke and a handful of counter-terrorism specialists at the C.I.A. had learned of an Air Force plan to arm the Predator. The original plan called for three years of tests. Clarke and the others pushed so hard that the plane was ready in three months. In tests, the craft worked surprisingly well. In the summer of 2001, an armed Predator destroyed a model of bin Laden's house which had been built in the Nevada desert. But Clarke said, "Every time we were ready to use it, the C.I.A. would change its mind. The real motivation within the C.I.A., I think, is that some senior people below Tenet were saying, 'It's fine to kill bin Laden, but we want to do it in a way that leaves no fingerprints. Otherwise, C.I.A. agents all over the world will be subject to assassination themselves.' They also worried

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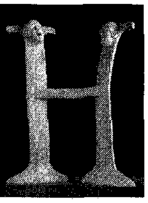

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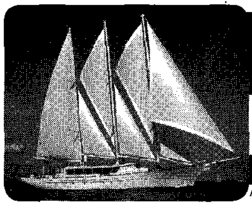

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that something would go wrong—they'd blow up a convent and get blamed."

On September 4, 2001, all sides agree, the issue reached a head, at a meeting of the Principal's Committee of Bush's national-security advisers, a Cabinet-level group that includes the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the director of the C.I.A., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Attorney General, and the national-security adviser. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz also attended that day. As Clarke, who was there, recalled, "Tenet said he opposed using the armed Predator, because it wasn't the C.I.A.'s job to fly airplanes that shot missiles. The Air Force said it wasn't their job to fly planes to collect intelligence. No one around the table seemed to have a can-do attitude. Everyone seemed to have an excuse."

"There was a discussion," the senior intelligence official confirmed. "The C.I.A. said, 'Who's got more experience flying aircraft that shoot missiles?' But the Air Force liked planes with pilots."

In looking back at the deadlock, Roger Cressey, Clarke's deputy for counterterrorism at the N.S.C., told me, "It sounds terrible, but we used to say to each other that some people didn't get it—it was going to take body bags."

A week later, in the worst terrorist attacks in history, which were carried out at bin Laden's direction, nearly three thousand Americans were killed. In November, Clarke said, the United States finally deployed the armed Predator to help destroy what video surveillance showed to be a high-level Al Qaeda meeting outside Kabul. In many respects, the trial run was a brilliant success. The strike killed Al Qaeda's military chief, Mohammad Atef, who left behind valuable documents. But evidently bin Laden was spared. A few weeks later, his voice was reportedly detected by agents on a satellite telephone near the Tora Bora cave complex. American B-52 bombers pounded the area. Afterward, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, "We've destroyed Al Qaeda in Afghanistan." But, once again, bin Laden evidently escaped.

One problem, Clarke suggested, was that the United States had waited too long before starting to bomb, and again had relied too heavily on "Afghans it had rented." In any event, Tora Bora was the last place that bin Laden was definitively detected alive by the United States. The best estimates are that he either walked, rode a donkey, or took a bus across the border into Pakistan, sometime in the third week of December, 2001.

It has been nearly two years since the attacks on New York and Washington, and there is now a growing debate in academic circles about how crucial a target bin Laden remains—given that, if he is indeed still alive, he has been driven almost completely underground. According to Jessica Stern, of Harvard, Al Qaeda is "still the most significant threat to U.S. national security today." But she told me that, because the organization has been decentralized by the relentless hunt for its leaders, capturing bin Laden "almost doesn't matter."

Gilles Kepel, a well-known French scholar of Islam, suggested that, without media exposure, bin Laden was "fading." He added, "Terrorism requires the media, but he's become invisible. It becomes less and less important to kill him, except as a trophy."

Those involved in the day-to-day battle against terrorism, however, are not convinced that bin Laden has become insignificant. They note that an alleged Al Qaeda spokesman warned recently of plans for another attack the size of September 11th. The triple bombings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on May 12th, which killed thirty-four and wounded more than two hundred, have now been traced to Al Qaeda, and intelligence agencies in Europe and Africa, as well as in the United States, have detected increased recruitment by Al Qaeda in response to the war in Iraq. A recent U.N. report asserted that Al Qaeda and the Taliban have regrouped in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan, and are showing "new boldness" in their attacks on international aid workers and coalition troops.

"Anyone who says that, at this point, getting bin Laden doesn't matter is, purposefully or not, providing a completely self-serving judgment," Rand Beers said. "It's not true. There would be a huge favorable political fallout to finding him. It would reverberate all over the Islamic world. Maybe someday it will matter less, but right now it's a continuing, nagging question, and a huge political embarrassment." ♦

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FOR OSAMA BIN LADEN

RALPH WALDO EMERSON
ON THE INTERNET

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Seymour M. Hersh
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Edna O'Brien
Maira Kalman
and more

AND: A calendar of *New Yorker*
events across the country

SHOUTS & MURMURS

REVIEW

BY PATRICIA MARX

—Is everyone here?

—What about Mrs. Kimball?

—She's still in the hospital.

—I thought they pulled the plug.

—She's having a *chin implant!*

—Let's begin, then. Anyone?

—Well, basically I liked it, but it definitely dragged.

—What doesn't? Everything is twenty minutes too long.

—He's right. Even when I really like a movie, I think, This is great! When will it be over?

—The only reason to do anything is to talk about it afterward.

—Isn't that why we're here?

—People, can we return to the comment that everything is too long?

—Sex isn't too long.

—Yeah? You should meet my husband.

—I felt the end was uninspired. I mean, death is a cliché.

—The whole thing didn't make sense. For instance, what was with the concept of weather? Room temperature wasn't good enough? It was always too cold or damp or—

—Are we still talking about sex with her husband?

—You know what I *did* like? The food. Aside from that silly drizzle thing restaurants started to put on dessert plates in the, what, seventies? Still, looking back, I had a lot of good stuff to eat.

—Oh, God, remember the seventies? Why did they have to end? That was such a great decade!

—Except for the part that Rod McKuen wrecked.

—See, it's not that it was too long; it's that it was too long in the wrong places. They should have let you freeze some of your time and tack it onto the end—the way the Wyndale Health & Racquet Club lets you freeze your membership for up to three months.

—Another perk for the rich! Everything was always geared to them.

—Not nature. What about nature?

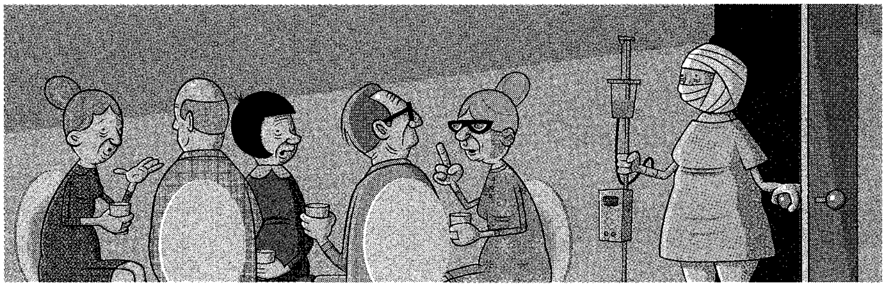
—I felt there could have been more colors. Not hues—*primary* colors. They could have come up with a fourth one, something sort of . . . bright drab.

—Oh, they were too busy developing the quote-unquote perfect sunset.

—You've got to admit, though, the idea of putting Chicago on a lake was excellent. They should have done more of that.

—You know what I could have come up with? The wheel.

—Sure, anyone could've. Once you have *round*, which they did, you're pretty much there.



MICHAEL WELDON

—But in a million years you'd never think of luggage on wheels.

—I enjoyed errands; did anyone else? And I got most of them done.

—Could we discuss the guests? How did so many jerks get invited?

—I know. There were, like, billions of people. I would have preferred a smaller guest list.

—Who says you would have made the cut?

—I say if they're going to have that many people they should make them wear nametags.

—I just wish that it had been a true meritocracy.

—No, no, absolutely no! I wish they'd based everything on alphabetical order, and I'm not just saying that because—well, yeah, I am.

—I hate to be catty, but did anyone ever meet that guy? He was from Philadelphia?

—Did he have a mustache?

—You're thinking of someone else. This guy was born in the early fifties. He was married to . . . oh, you know, what's her name, whose family was in that business?

—I met him. He bugged me.

—I didn't like his taste in shoes.

—I always wondered if he was latently gay.

—Or latently Jewish.

—Or dormantly Mormon. I love saying that.

—Excuse me. I'm not comfortable talking about people who aren't, uh, with us yet.

—Jeez, I can't think of any category of people better to talk about.

—Yes, at last we can speak ill of the living.

—Hello. Is this Banquet Room B?

—It is. And you are . . . ?

—Mrs. Kimball. Surgical-gauze accident.

—Eeew!

—Pull up a chair, Mrs. Kimball.

—I have some questions. I wrote them down. Is there a God? Are human beings born good, bad, or neither? Does a low-carb diet really work? How did Mia Farrow get so many good husbands? Are psychiatrists crazier than non-psychiatrists, or is it just ironic that they are equally crazy? Was it my mother's or my father's fault that I developed bursitis? What really happened that night with Larry?

—I'm sorry, Mrs. Kimball, we're not about Truth with a big "T." All right, now, who thinks that Shelly Oughten was cheating on Eric in the early nineties? You in the striped shirt. ♦

PROFILES

MISSING IN ACTION

Lee Bontecou was a major artist. Then she decided she didn't need the art world.

BY CALVIN TOMKINS

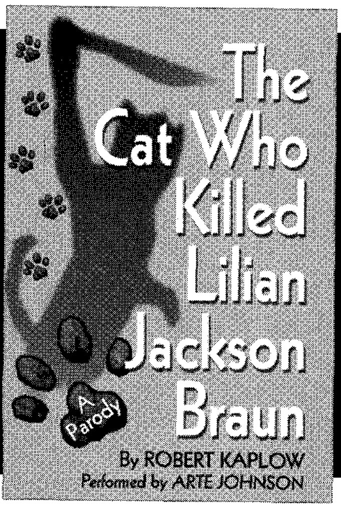
The disappearance of Lee Bontecou has been an art-world mystery for more than thirty years. Only a handful of male artists broke from the starting gate as strongly as she did in the nineteen-sixties, and no women came close. She showed at the Leo Castelli Gallery, the era's primary launching pad for new talent, and her work also appeared in three Whitney Museum annuals and dozens of important exhibitions here and abroad, including the Museum of Modern Art's huge and influential "The Art of Assemblage," in 1961, and its "Americans 1963," two years later. Donald Judd, a critic who would soon become a major artist, called her "one of the best artists working anywhere." There were stories about her in *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Life*, and other magazines, most of which took note of the contrast between her shy-little-girl looks and what the art historian Alan Solomon called "the imposing scale and implied violence in her dark and threatening reliefs." And then, inexplicably, she vanished.

Nobody seemed to know where she had gone, or why, although of course there were rumors. It was said that her husband, a less successful artist named William Giles, was unable to deal with her fame, and that as a result they had moved away from New York and she had stopped making art. Her work from the sixties, the strangely compelling drawings and the big, rather menacing steel-and-canvas relief sculptures, with their black holes and aggressive projections, could still be seen in public collections here and abroad—most prominently in the lobby of the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center, where a twenty-foot-long relief, the largest she ever did, commands a wall to the right of the main entrance. Occasionally, someone would put together a small Bontecou show, without her consent or participation, but as the years passed her reputation faded, and her name ceased to register with younger artists. It came as a shock, therefore, to hear in 2002 that a major Lee Bontecou retrospective exhibition was on the way, and that about half the work in it had been done since 1971. The show is scheduled to open on October 5th at the U.C.L.A. Hammer Museum, in Los Angeles; it goes from there to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and then, a year from this summer, to the Museum of Modern Art, where it will be on view for two months at MOMA's temporary facility in Queens. The seventy-two-year-old artist has worked closely with the exhibition's organizing curator, Elizabeth Smith, and she has promised—dutifully but gamely—to show up for all three openings.

The reëntry process may be disorienting for someone who has been so quietly determined to keep the world at bay. Bontecou and Bill Giles have lived for many years in a deeply rural part of Pennsylvania, on property they bought in 1966 as a summer home. It's an hour and a half west of Harrisburg, which makes it about four hours from New York City by car, and the last part of the trip, which I took in late April, involves directions like "Alert! Chickens on roadside" and "Go apprx. 1 mile to five mail boxes on left." A narrow, deeply rutted dirt road takes you over a steep ridge, and leads, in time, to a century-old farmhouse on the far side of a meadow. Lee and Bill Giles both came out of the house to greet me, along with their frantically barking Australian cattle dog, Digger. "You're right on time!" Bill said cheerfully. "That's unheard of."

Lee, a small woman in a baggy sweater and corduroy pants, was instantly recognizable from the photographs that Ugo Mulas took of her for his 1967 book, "New York: The New Art Scene," where she figures as the lone woman artist in a roster of male stars that includes Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and

"Mercifully short."
—Susan Stamberg, National Public Radio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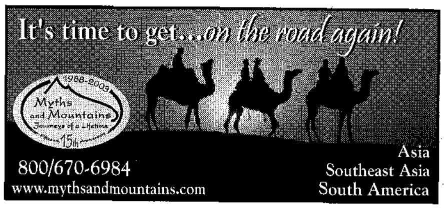

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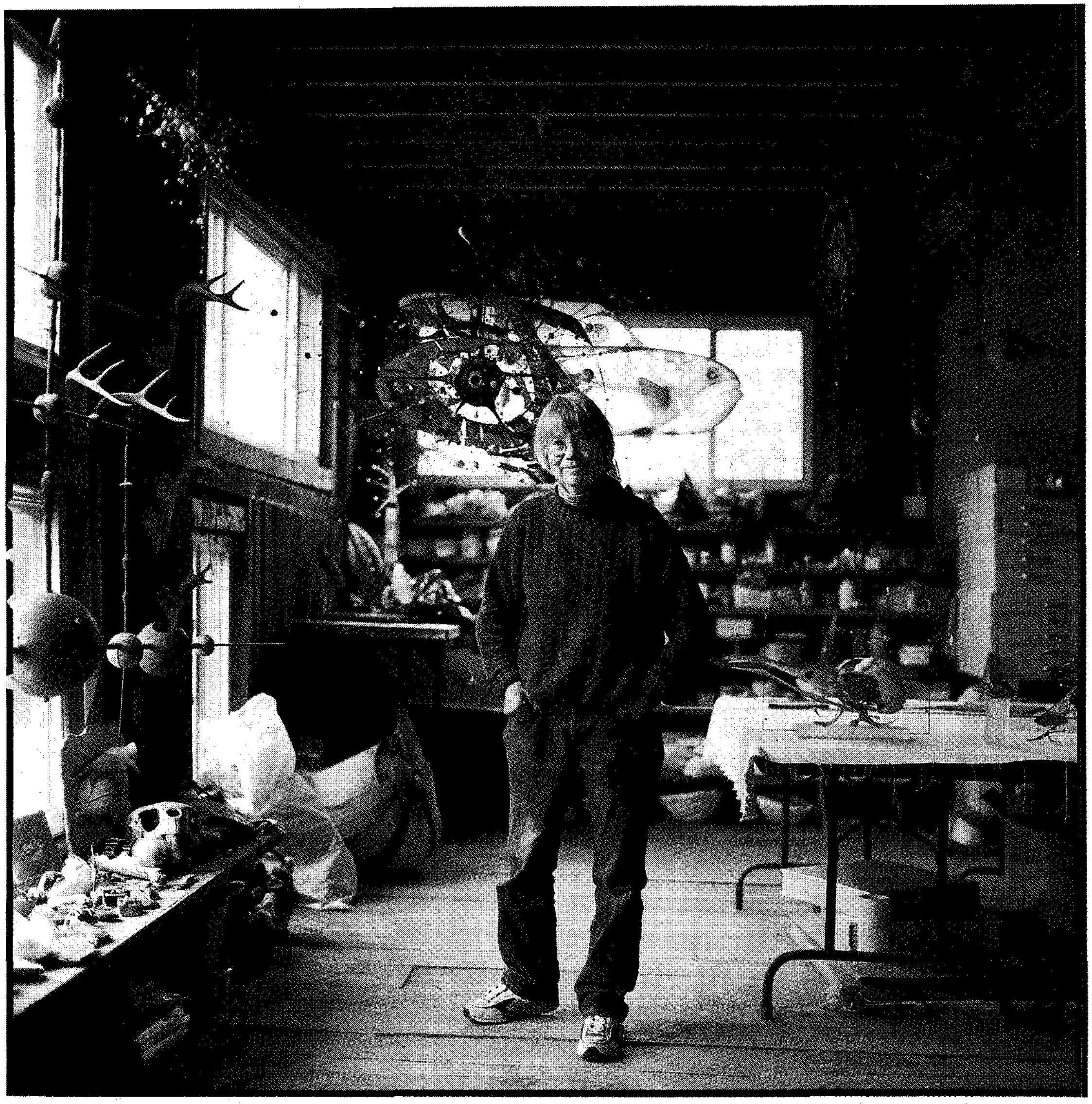

"Being an artist is not a career," Bontecou said in her studio. "It's just something that grabs you." Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

Claes Oldenburg. She looks older now, of course, and her cropped hair and straight-cut bangs are graying, but she has the same trim, tomboyish figure, turned-up button nose, and open-faced appeal. Both she and Bill were relaxed and friendly, and they seemed easy together. "They know how to deal with each other," I had been told by Valerie Giles, their grown daughter, who is a field biologist with the American Museum of Natural History in New York. "I just remember, as a kid, thinking that they were the best friends."

After a while, Bill went off to check on a new house that they're building on another part of their property (it will include large studios for both of them), and Lee and I walked over to her present studio, in a red barn. The studio is somewhat makeshift and ramshackle, with a smallish room on the ground floor, where she does welding and fires her ceramics, and a larger room up a flight of open plank stairs, where she draws and works on the sculptures she's been making since the early nineteen-eighties. The unheated upstairs room was a little chilly on this early spring day, but it had windows on three sides and was full of light. Packing and shipping for the three-museum retrospective would not start for another month or so, and the room, I realized, contained fifty years of her work, on shelves and walls and long tables or hanging from the ceiling: terra-cotta figures of people, birds, and animals, from the late nineteen-fifties; three wall reliefs from the early sixties, one of which, she told me, used to serve as her money box—she tossed loose change into its single projecting hole; a large transparent plastic fish, from the early seventies, quite realistic, suspended from the ceiling in a corner of the room; and two dozen or more of her new sculptures (new since about 1980, that is), which are astonishing. Ranging from a few square inches to more than six feet in diameter, they are delicate yet powerful constructions made of interlaced steel wires with small metal and ceramic elements and wire mesh worked into them. Some of the smaller sculptures are completely abstract, but in the larger ones natural forms and recognizable images appear—eyes, beaks, fins, teeth, and curving, sail-like arcs. They are shot through with flashes of subtle, nondescript color, silver and black and bone white and a sort of metallic green, like the color of oxidized copper, which turned out to be just that—copper-wire mesh treated with acid. There was a sense of star charts and galaxies, planetary systems, undersea worlds.

My first thought was that the new pieces were nothing at all like the wall reliefs that had made her famous, that they were lighter, more lyrical, and far more complex. This thought lasted about five minutes, until it hit me that they were also totally unlike the work of any artist I had ever seen—except Lee Bontecou. All the characteristics of the early work were there—the obsessive attention to detail, excluding any sort of personal "touch"; the exquisite workmanship, every tiny ceramic bead rolled and fired and affixed by the artist, every coil of thin wire meticulously wrapped by her fingers, as though she had never heard of studio assistants; the willingness to push an idea to extremes, risking failure at every point; and, underlying the whole enterprise, the ongoing dialogue between the natural world and the world of pure imagination, and the willingness to let the uglier and scarier aspects of both worlds interact with their possibilities of unexpected beauty. The new Bontecous came right out of the old ones, no question, and the amazing thing, which became clear in subsequent conversations, was that the work had developed and widened and deepened in an isolation so complete that she might as well have been on another planet.

So there it was—an artist like Bontecou didn't need the art world, didn't need the stimulation of seeing other art and testing her own against it, didn't need to exhibit or discuss or sell her work in order to keep developing and expanding her talent. An artist like Bontecou could work in isolation for thirty years, and give up nothing, not even her basic sanity and sense of humor. "Being an artist is not a career," she told me that afternoon in her studio. "It's just something that grabs you. You can't say, 'I'm going to be an artist,' because you have a little talent. I think that's the problem. I think maybe that's why there are so many of them."

INOCULATION

Cotton Mather studied smallpox for a while,
instead of sin. Boston was rife with it.
Not being ill himself, thank Providence,
but one day asking his slave, Onesimus,
if he'd ever had the pox. To which Onesimus replied,
"Yes and No." Not insubordinate
or anything of the kind, but playful, or perhaps
musing, as one saying to another:

"Consider how a man
can take inside all manner of disease
and still survive."

Then, graciously, when Mather asked again:

My mother bore me in the southern wild.
She scratched my skin and I got sick, but lived
to come here, free of smallpox, as your slave.

—*Susan Donnelly*

The idea of becoming an artist didn't grab her until she was in college. Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1931, she grew up in various towns in Westchester County, New York, and went to public schools, but what she remembers most about childhood is the long summers at her maternal grandmother's house in Nova Scotia. "The house was on a small island shaped like an 'H,'" she said. "The roads were all dirt, and the cows were free to go anywhere they wanted. The dogs were free, the chickens were free, and the children were free." Lee and her older brother, Hank, and the fishermen's children spent their time in and out of the ocean. She still misses it. Being around water was as important to her as it was to her father, Russell Bontecou (the name reflects his French Huguenot ancestry), who taught her to tie flies. "Fishing was his thing," she said. "He and my uncle loved it so much they decided to get a canoe that wouldn't break on them—they were always punching holes in the Old Towns—so they went to Canada and got someone to make one for them out of aluminum." Lee's father earned his living as a salesman. He went to work for Grumman, which, with his help, developed its own aluminum canoe and sent him all over the country selling it.

Not until Lee went away to Bradford Junior College, in Massachusetts, and began taking a lot of art courses did she start to think seriously about being an artist. She graduated from Bradford in 1952, and spent the next three years at the Art Students League of New York. Her parents took care of her expenses the first year, but after that she insisted on working so that she could pay her own way. One summer, she got a scholarship to the Skowhegan art school in Maine, where she learned how to do metal welding. The other students got a kick out of her energy and ambition, this slim girl who spent weeks welding a semi-abstract cast-iron sculpture of a thirteen-foot-tall man. (To finish it, she had to stand on the roof of a car.) Abstract Expressionism was the dominant influence then, and Lee worked under the spell of de Kooning and Kline. "That's where I got my energy," she recalls. "They really gave you energy." In 1957, she won a Fulbright fellowship to live in Rome. She found an inexpensive, unheated studio in Rome's Trastevere district, and started working in terra-cotta over a reinforced-concrete base, making dense, semi-abstract animal and bird shapes (a few of which she cast in bronze) and "some strange-looking people," influenced by Mayan and Etruscan sculpture and also by Henry Moore.

Bontecou spent almost two years in Rome, drawing and making sculpture. Toward the end of the second year, something unexpected happened. While welding with an acetylene torch in her studio, she accidentally discovered that if the oxygen wasn't turned on what came out of the nozzle was rich, velvety-black soot. Intrigued, she tried drawing with it, moving the torch very quickly so that the paper wouldn't burn. "I don't know why, but that was exciting," she recalled. "The way it went on, the depth." She made a lot of very large soot drawings, which she thought of as "worldscapes," with gradations of blackness in them. "The black opened up something for me," she said. "It was so deep—it gave you a feeling of outer space. I just knew where I was going, even though I didn't."

Returning to New York in the fall of 1958, she moved into a loft space over a laundry on the Lower East Side, at Avenue C and Sixth Street, with an artist friend from Skowhegan named Wilhelmina Van Ness. There was no central heating, but they had a couple of gas heaters which they sat on in the coldest weather. Lee also bored some holes in the floor, and during the daytime steam from the laundry would rise up and blunt the chill. The lavatory had no tub or shower, so she tapped into an overhead hot-water pipe and took showers standing on the toilet, on a piece of corrugated metal with a hole in it that funnelled the water down into the bowl. "Lee took the initiative in just about everything," according to Van Ness, who now lives in Massachusetts. "Once, she found a bunch of mouse babies running around, and she got them into two suitcases and then into a paper bag, and we took them up on the subway to Central Park and released them."

Lee kept up with what was going on in the New York museums and galleries. She went a couple of times to the Cedar bar, where the Abstract Expressionists hung out, but she didn't socialize much with other artists. The sculptor Sidney Simon, whom she had met at Skowhegan (he was one of the school's four founders), arranged for her to show some of the terra-cotta animals she had done in Rome at a small gallery on East Fifty-ninth Street called Gallery G, but by then she was onto something quite different. Lee had found a new material. It was heavy canvas, cut from worn-out conveyor belts that the laundryman downstairs was discarding. She welded together small metal frames or boxes, and stretched pieces of the canvas over them, securing them with copper wires whose ends she twisted together. It was hard, punishing work, partly because she never wore gloves. Her fingers got mangled, and sparks from the welding torch left burn marks up and down her arms. The turning point came when she realized that by mounting her boxes on the wall, so they projected out into the room at eye level, she could give them a sense of great depth. Her relief sculptures got bigger and more aggressive; some of them were six feet square and two or three feet deep. A recurrent motif was a roughly circular opening, a black hole, like the mouth of a cave that you couldn't see into. There might be three or more of these mysterious tunnels in a single relief; she lined them with black velvet, or used soot from the welding torch to get the deepest blacks. "You couldn't see the back of them, so you got that endless feeling, like when you look up at the sky," she said. "I was so excited about them, I just wanted to stay and work. And of course every piece I made was a disappointment, because it didn't . . ." Her sentences have a way of trailing off. "But at least I'd know I'd finished something."

Ivan C. Karp, who was Leo Castelli's main assistant (and who now runs the OK Harris gallery, in SoHo), heard about her work and visited the studio with Richard Bellamy, a young dealer who had an exceptionally keen eye for new talent. Karp remembers "the pumping, pounding sound of laundry machines throughout the visit." Castelli came a week later, and offered her a show. The Castelli Gallery was just hitting its stride by then—it had opened in 1957—and because it represented Johns and Rauschenberg it was already a magnet for ambitious young artists and collectors. Bontecou had her first solo show there in the fall of 1960. (Castelli had put her in a group show the previous May.) The reviews were generally positive; *Art in America* called her "the find of the year."

Bontecou was then the only female artist in the Castelli Gallery. Feminists and anti-feminists alike found sexual implications in her black holes, some of which enclosed saw blades and Army-surplus objects that she picked up in sec-

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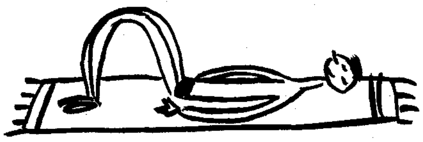
ondhand stores on Canal Street. Dore Ashton, one of the era's more astute critics, threw cold water on the "vagina dentata" innuendos, calling Bontecou's central motif "far more significant than the obvious sexual connotations so often invoked," and Bontecou herself, in a brief note published in the "Americans 1963" catalogue, made it clear that her concerns were more social than psychological. What she wanted, she wrote, was "to build things that express our relation to this country—to other countries—to this world—to other worlds—in terms of myself." She had a shortwave radio that she listened to when she worked, and a lot of the world's news troubled her profoundly: Patrice Lumumba's murder in the Congo, the Cuban revolution's betrayal of its ideals, the beginnings of the Vietnam War. Lee felt that there were two sides to her work, reflected in two kinds of reliefs, dark and light. "The light ones are about space, or adventure, or freedom of one kind or another," she told me; in the dark ones, she was "thinking about world events, and also one side of human nature, the underbelly, the ugly side of us. I usually had about five different pieces going at once, bouncing from the negative to the positive."

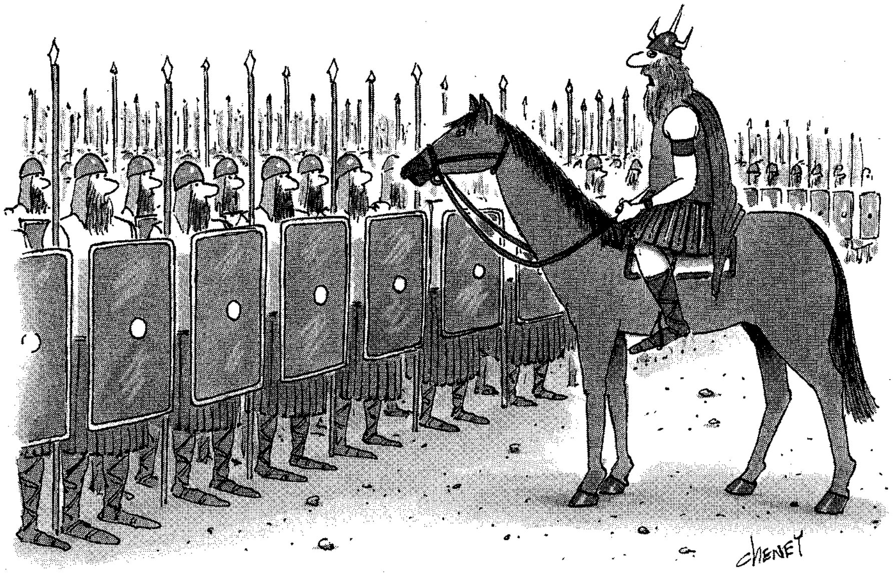
The Lincoln Center piece, which the architect Philip Johnson commissioned from her in 1964 for the lobby of his New York State Theatre, is one of the light ones. It came at just the right moment—she'd been wanting to do a really big sculpture, and the space, a few steps up from the theatre lobby, on the right, was perfect for what she had in mind. Recently, she had been spending time at Idlewild airport, watching the jets take off and land. "I'd just go and sit looking out the windows, not thinking about sculpture or anything," she said. "I liked that place on the engine where the flame comes out." For her new commission, she went to Canal Street and bought some actual airplane parts, including the Plexiglas canopy from a Second World War plane. She incorporated the canopy, which she painted white, into a twenty-foot-long canvas-and-metal relief sculpture shaped something like an airplane wing. The piece conveys a powerful sense of lifting energy, as though it were about to take off, and it complements its setting, according to Philip Johnson, "like a baroque statue in the niche of a baroque hall." Thousands of people pass by it every evening, without the least notion of who did it.

Leo Castelli was very fond of Lee. According to Frank Stella, who joined the gallery in 1959, she was sort of the "gallery pet"; it surprised Stella to discover that she was a few years older than he was. Although friendly with everyone, Lee felt no real affinity with Stella or any other artists in the gallery. It was the Abstract Expressionists she admired, not Rauschenberg, and certainly not the Pop artists, whose work she saw as a glorification of commercial culture. She got along fine at first with the courtly, ever-accommodating Castelli, until he asked her to cut down one of her wall reliefs. "A client wanted to buy it, but he wanted it flat against the wall," she told me, "so Leo suggested I take the box part off. I had to ask him to repeat it. There were a couple of other times when he wanted me to do that, and I realized, They don't get it—they think it's a decoration." The only artist of her generation whose work Lee did feel an affinity with was Bill Giles. Castelli had given Giles a one-man show in January, 1960, ten months before Lee's first show there. It consisted of ripped and slashed canvases with broken stretchers, hung from the ceiling or draped over chairs and other objects—violent, angry-looking work, some of it slathered with raw pigments applied by hand. Not too many people would have seen a connection to Bontecou's meticulously crafted reliefs, but Lee felt they were both working in "the same spirit, which we had inherited from the Abstract Expressionists."

Lee and Bill Giles were pals for several years before they started living together. Giles had lots of artist friends. He came from a small town in South Carolina, had served as a medic in the Korean War, and had fallen into art mainly because he liked to draw and couldn't stand to be around any form of authority. Giles was ambitious and prickly; Stella remembers him as "having a lot of good ideas and a talent for presenting them in unacceptable ways." Jasper Johns (a fellow South Carolinian) had introduced him to Castelli, and Giles had hung out with Johns and Rauschenberg until his mounting resentment of Castelli got in the way. Giles thought Castelli was promoting Johns and Rauschenberg at the expense of the gallery's other artists. His feelings about Castelli and Ileana Sonnabend, Castelli's former wife and close associate, are still extremely bitter. He maintains that when he told them he was leaving the Castelli Gallery—after being in one group show and one solo show there in 1960—Sonnabend said she and Leo would see to it that he never had another exhibition in New York. People who knew Castelli (he died in 1999), myself included, have trouble reconciling this with Castelli's personality, or with his reputation for what Ivan Karp called "reckless generosity" toward artists. As for Sonnabend, she said last week, "I can't imagine having said something so silly. Can anyone prevent an artist from having a show?" In any case, Giles did have other New York shows in the sixties, and he continued to have quite a few artist friends, and in 1964, after breaking up with the latest in a long succession of girlfriends, his "best buddy" relationship with Lee turned into something much deeper. Giles moved into Lee's new loft studio in SoHo, on Wooster Street, and they have been together ever since.



Giles's antipathy toward Castelli did not interfere with Bontecou's showing there. "If that's what she wanted, it was fine with me," he said, when I asked about it. "Lee and I disagree all the time about things like that. If you insist on total freedom, you've got to give it." Lee's work was changing in the mid-sixties. She made some small, lightweight wooden pieces, not unlike the model airplanes that she and her brother used to make when they were growing up. For her original pieces she often used hardwood, not balsa, cutting and steaming and bending it to her own specifications. Castelli showed the lightweight pieces in 1966. Lee also made a series of metal relief sculptures that were predominantly white, with metal grilles and other bought elements that suggested prison bars. "I used to walk by the women's prison in the Village," she said, "and hear them yell at you from way up high." Her new work was more integrated and finished-looking than the canvas reliefs, and not as threatening. References to plants and insects and marine life appeared in some of the sculptures, as they frequently did in her drawings. The drawings were always a major and independent part of her output; only rarely did a drawing relate directly to a sculpture.



"And remember—make it look like an accident."

• •

None of this work seemed to have much in common with a New York art world in thrall to Pop art and Minimalism. All through the sixties, Bontecou's unique and unclassifiable work kept appearing in the big international loan shows like the Corcoran Biennial, in Washington, D.C., and Documenta III, in Kassel, Germany, where it puzzled many observers and struck a deep response in others—especially artists. Eva Hesse, one of a number of younger women who were coming into prominence in the sixties, wrote in her diary after visiting Bontecou's studio, "I am amazed at what that woman can do. . . . The complexity of her structures, what is involved, absolutely floored me." Joseph Cornell, the reclusive maker of collages and piercingly evocative shadow boxes, also came to her studio. The fact that Bontecou's name appears several times in Cornell's diaries has led some art historians to think they were friends, but Lee says they were not. Bontecou had remained something of a loner. She didn't go to art-world parties, and she was less and less interested in what other artists were doing. In Bill Giles, moreover, she seemed to have found someone whose wavelength was in synchrony with hers. They got married in the spring of 1965 at City Hall, and their only child, Valerie, was born soon afterward.

Valerie spent her first summer in the old farmhouse that Bill and Lee had found in the hills of central Pennsylvania. They had gone to explore the area with Tom and Jane Doyle, their closest friends, who were also looking for an inexpensive summer place; the Doyles bought a property five miles from theirs. Tom Doyle, a sculptor who worked in wood, had once been married to Eva Hesse. His family had owned land around there since 1737—the town of Doylesburg was named after them. Bill and Lee's place was forty-five minutes from a food market, which gave Lee an incentive to plant a garden. After several months at the farm, as they called it, their SoHo neighborhood seemed unbearable. "The whole area around Wooster Street had changed," according to Lee. "There were transvestites, and parades at three in the morning." They moved to Bill's studio on Greene Street, which was a little quieter, and started to think about getting out of New York.

The work that Lee showed at Castelli's in 1971 was a complete surprise. She had carved objects out of Styrofoam and put them in a vacuum-forming press that transformed them into plastic fish, flowers, and plant forms, some of which were quite large. Lee had been thinking about the environmental degradation going on in the world, and a number of her plants had plastic tubes coming out of them, as though they were on life support. "It was just my naïve kind of thing, that everything was becoming artificial and fake," she said. The plastic sculptures anticipated a lot of subsequent work by Kiki Smith, Lynda Benglis, and other artists, but in 1971 there was nothing like them, and the reviews ranged from tepid to cruel. Writing in the *Times*, James R. Mellow compared the work to a natural-history exhibit, and referred to its "illustrational stodginess." "The show didn't go over very well," Lee told me. "People didn't quite like them, but that was fine." Some people assumed that the reaction to the 1971 show was what made Bontecou turn her back on the art world. A mid-career retrospective of her work at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art in 1972 was well received, however, and Bontecou was not the sort of artist who would be unhinged by negative reviews. Other things were going on in her life then, and in her mind. She was deeply invested in being a mother, but even more important, as she put it to me, "I needed a rest. I wanted to explore and expand. I just didn't want to have to make things, and finish things, and show them every two years."

Bill Giles urged her to go to another gallery—he suggested Knoedler, the venerable Old Master gallery that also represents a few contemporary artists—but Lee wasn't interested. The notion of Giles as a sort of Svengali who couldn't stand his wife's success and forced her to give it up breaks down here. Bontecou has always gone her own way, and no one understands this better than he does. Her own way, at this point, was to become a teacher. The people who thought she had disappeared never knew that from 1971 to 1991 she was teaching in the art department of Brooklyn College, a few subway stops from SoHo. Lee taught a sculpture course, two undergraduate design courses, and a course in graduate drawing. It was a full schedule, which she was usually able to squeeze into two days a week. "I think in any other school I would have quit after one year," she said. "I lucked out. Morris Dorsky, the head of the department, let us teach any way we wanted." Dorsky, who was brash and voluble, used to walk into her classes and say, "Lee, why aren't you showing?" Not many Brooklyn College students knew about her reputation. She brought in slides of her sculptures once, because some graduate students had asked to see them, but aside from that she didn't talk with students about her own work. One student recalls that in the criticism sessions she was too gentle to criticize anybody's work. Lee seems to have left no vivid impressions as an art teacher. "I loved the students," she said, "but for me teaching was a way to get out of the art world."

Out of the city, too, as it turned out. Lee and Bill and Valerie lived in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, for a year in the early seventies, so Bill could go to a flying school there and learn to fly helicopters. He thought he might use his commercial pilot's license to earn money as a crop duster on farms near their property, which was just an hour's drive from Gettysburg, and for a brief period he did do that, but mainly he just wanted to fly. He got his license, and bought a used helicopter, and then they moved to eastern Long Island, where you could rent a house cheaply for the winter months, and where they had found a good school for Val. Two years later, they moved to Rockland County, New York. Lee would usually spend one night a week in Manhattan, in a small Village apartment that belonged to her cousin, so she could put in her two days of teaching at Brooklyn College. Her father came to live with them while they were in Rockland County; his wife had died, and he was ailing. Lee took care of him for the last four years of his life. She had stopped going to art galleries and museums. In 1977, she finally told Leo Castelli that she was leaving his gallery. She remembers that Leo kept her waiting for a while, but that he was gracious and kind about the decision, and said she could come back anytime.

Lee had not stopped making art, but Bill had. Bill was trying to teach himself to write. He wrote a novel about the art world, which was not published. Contrary and anti-authoritarian, as always, Bill couldn't accept any sort of editing. When he was making art, he had frequently felt the need to destroy his own work. Lee wasn't like that. During the seventies, when they moved so often and she rarely had a decent studio to work in, Lee made small sculptures and a lot of drawings. At the farm, she gardened and cooked, and canned her own organic fruit and vegetables. "We were like homesteaders," she said. They kept chickens and goats, and took in wild animals from time to time—a fawn whose leg had been damaged by a farmer's mower, a skunk, a hawk or two, baby quail. Tom Doyle calls Lee "the greatest worker I ever saw in my life," somebody who "just accepts a lot of things, and does her work, no matter what happens." Bill Giles sees it a little differently. "Lee's life is seamless," he told me. "Gardening, making sculpture, cooking dinner—it's all part of the same process."

Gahan Wilson

"Extra! Extra! News of a gentler, bygone time!"

In the late seventies, Giles delved deeply into the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, the eighteenth-century Swedish scientist and religious mystic. He and Lee had become dissatisfied with the Rudolf Steiner school that Valerie was attending in Rockland County, so they moved to a town just outside Philadelphia called Bryn Athyn, where the Swedenborgian New Church had established its American headquarters. It was in Bryn Athyn that Lee started making the new sculptures I saw in her studio.

A year or so after Valerie went away to college, Lee retired from teaching and she and Bill moved permanently to the farm. Their life there was increasingly isolated. The Doyles had moved to Connecticut. Bill and Lee received no newspapers; they got most of their news from Lee's shortwave radio. They had no interest in and no knowledge of what was going on in contemporary art. Bill eventually started making his own art works again, on a computer; he posts the results from time to time on his Web site (www.jylzpixelations.com), along with over-the-top fulminations about what he sees as the art world's total corruption. Lee doesn't challenge Bill's opinions; she seems to accept most of them, in a somewhat milder form—"Billy just wants the truth," she says. Lee keeps the peace and gets on with her work. Their marriage has worked this way for a long time, with a great deal of affection and respect on both sides.

Although Bill believed that Castelli had consistently and maliciously discouraged people from getting in touch with them, refusing to give out their address and telephone number, occasionally a dealer or curator would get through, and Lee would either ignore the overture or say she wasn't interested. When Klaus Kertess was organizing the 1995 Whitney Biennial, he wanted to put Bontecou in it. He didn't know anything about her new work, but he had seen some early Bontecous in a small loan show in 1993, which prompted him to contact her through a mutual friend. The answer was no.

The 1993 show that Kertess saw had

been organized by Elizabeth Smith, a young curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. Smith had tried to enlist Lee's participation, but her letters had gone unanswered until she mailed her the draft text for the exhibition brochure. "Then one day, out of the blue, Lee called to suggest some changes," Smith told me. "She was polite and helpful." Lee didn't go to the opening, but she did go to Los Angeles a month or so later, and saw the show, and Smith kept in touch with her. In 1999, Smith wrote to Bontecou to say that she was moving to Chicago, to become chief curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art there, and shortly after that Lee invited her to the farm. "When I saw the new work, I was very excited," Smith said. "I asked whether she would consider showing this work, and she said, 'You know, I think I might.' "

Bontecou had been an obsession of Elizabeth Smith's for so long that she didn't quite trust her own judgment, so she asked Ann Philbin, who had recently become the director of the U.C.L.A. Hammer Museum, to come and look at it. Philbin had wanted to show Bontecou's drawings at the Drawing Center in New York, which she directed from 1990 to 1999, but Lee had not replied to her letters. She visited the farm with Smith in October, 2001, and any anxieties that the new work might be a disappointment were instantly put to rest. "I actually thought for a moment I was going to faint," Philbin remembers. "I just thought, *Yes*, it *is* amazing."

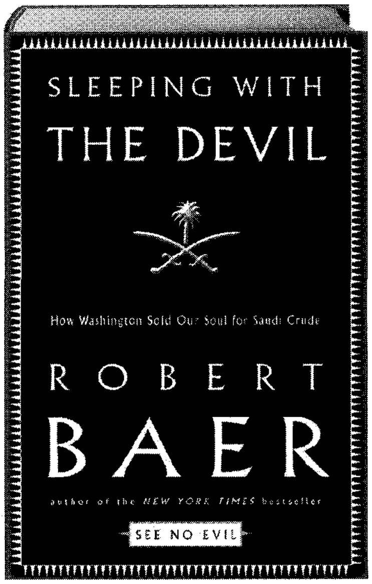
Smith and Philbin decided to organize a joint exhibition at their respective museums. They also approached both the Whitney Museum and the Museum of Modern Art. The Whitney, which had just cancelled an Eva Hesse retrospective, ran true to its current myopic form and rejected Bontecou as well; MOMA, whose curators Rob Storr and Gary Garrels pushed hard for it, eventually signed on. But why, after all these years, did Bontecou agree to the show? Smith thinks that illness may have been a precipitating factor. Lee, who had hardly ever been sick, came down in 2000 with a debilitating blood disorder that was eventually diagnosed as aplastic anemia. "I thought I was a goner," she told me. Her recovery had a lot to do with the care she received from Bill Giles, who scoured the Internet for new information and homeopathic treatments after the doctors had more or less given up, and who finally took her away for three months to Arizona and New Mexico. Bill himself has chronic asthma and other respiratory problems, but he devoted himself full time to nursing Lee, and slowly, gradually, she got better. When they returned to the farm that spring, she was feeling much stronger. "And I thought, Gee, you know, I'd better . . ." Lee let the thought trail off, but then said, "I didn't want to leave all this for Billy and Val to deal with." The implication seemed to be that she was thinking about her place in art history, although this was something she would never have said. "What's very clear," according to Philbin, "is that she has been and is in complete control of her career."

Having agreed to the retrospective, she could no longer ignore the art world. Elizabeth Smith and Ann Philbin tried to help Lee find a New York gallery, and Smith took her around to several of them. Lee finally chose Knoedler, the gallery that Bill had suggested thirty years before. "It was the only place I really liked," she told me. "It's laid back, it's not hot shot, and it's a place I remember going to as a kid."

I asked Lee how she felt about the retrospective, now that the works for it were all selected and the Los Angeles opening date was approaching fast. We were sitting in her old studio, on the barn's second floor. A late-afternoon sun played reflective tricks with one of the hanging sculptures, and a couple of punch-drunk wasps knocked against the window inside, trying to get out. "It's a very lovely thing to be happening," she said slowly, "but I can't get excited about it, and I really hate all the details that go into a big show." She was somewhat concerned that the press would try to turn her into "the comeback kid," which in her mind would be truly awful. As she once said to Ann Philbin, "I've never left the art world. I'm in the real art world." She's prepared for the critics to say, as they usually do, that the early work was the best, but she probably won't pay much attention to the critical analysis and art-speak that are bound to rise like swamp gas from the effects of her reëntry. Lee would almost certainly agree with what Barnett Newman, one of her revered Abstract Expressionists, had to say about art-critical discourse: "Aesthetics is for the artist as ornithology is for the birds." ◆

From the author of
The New York Times bestseller
See No Evil

"Saudi Arabia is no abstraction. It's a powder keg waiting to explode.
When that happens, it could carry me, you, our savings and security away with it…


SLEEPING WITH
THE DEVIL
How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude
ROBERT
BAER
author of the NEW YORK TIMES bestseller
SEE NO EVIL

…The house of Sa'ud knows what the West is only beginning to learn: Worse horrors are out there waiting, worse than Usama bin Laden. We have to face up to a kingdom at war with itself."
—Robert Baer, 20-year veteran of the CIA's Directorate of Operations

Robert Baer tells a true, alarming story of raw corruption, terrorist connections, and dangerous compromise—between Washington and American business—that has turned Saudi Arabia into one of the most dangerous spots in the world. It's a marriage of blood, money, and oil, ripe for disaster.

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ANNALS OF THE SEA

WRECK OF THE PANDORA

The fate of the men sent to hunt down the Bounty mutineers.

BY CAROLINE ALEXANDER

By air, the Great Barrier Reef can be seen for what it truly is. From the height of thirty-seven thousand feet, or from the fifteen hundred feet of a high-winged, low-flying charter—or from the one hundred feet of, say, the crow's nest of a ship of sail—there is little hint of the coral forests that constitute the planet's largest living organism; rather, the reef is revealed to be a lurking, erratic chain of amoeba-shaped blobs, lagoon-encircled half-moons, and vaguely oblong chunks that bring to mind enormous drifting opal-colored whales. The reef system runs in two roughly parallel lines—the inner reef, piecemeal and confused, and the more massive outer reef, whose long banks of coral can extend virtually unbroken for hundreds of miles. From just north of Fraser Island, off the southern coast of Queensland, to the tip of Cape York, the northernmost point of the Australian continent, the reef runs for more than twelve hundred and fifty miles. At its northern extremity, it disintegrates into messy fragments that, along with countless shoals, atolls, sandbars, and isles, litter the narrow, hundred-mile divide between Papua New Guinea and Australia, formerly known as the Endeavour Strait and today as the Torres Strait.

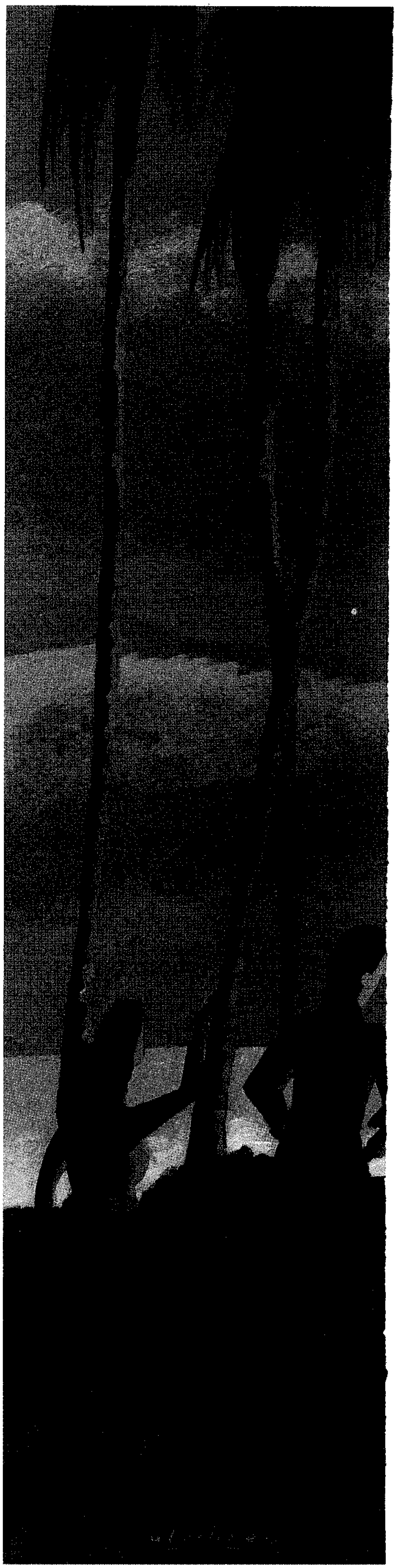
Under skies scattered with broken clouds, shadows darken and patch the water, mingling among the great reef patterns. This is the scene that presents itself to a ship intent on navigating the Queensland coast, or entering the channel of the strait. Today, even possessing radar and charts and guided by beacons, no ship is allowed through the strait unless directed by an approved pilot. For sailing ships of an earlier era, these were waters fraught with unknowable dangers; some twenty-five hundred wrecks are estimated to be strewn along the reef, and many more undoubtedly lie undiscovered.

On the morning of August 25, 1791, a lone British naval vessel sailing west toward the Endeavour Strait spotted the warning sign of breakers. Hauling south, the ship skirted the shoal upon which, as her captain noted, the deceptive sea broke very moderately, "in some places barely perceptibly."

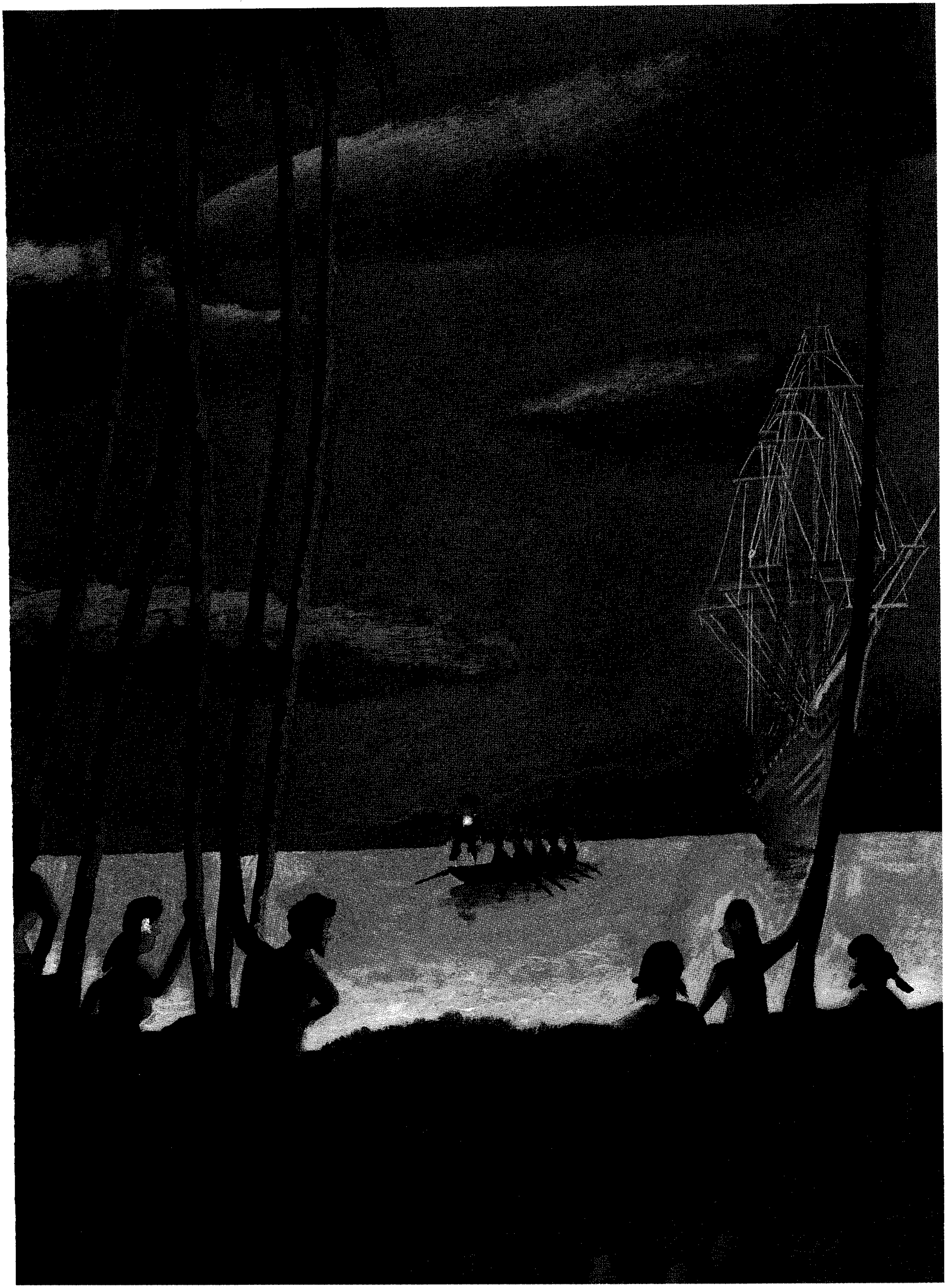
The ship, H.M.S. Pandora, a twenty-four-gun frigate under the command of Captain Edward Edwards, was approaching the final leg of her long voyage. She had departed English shores ten months earlier, in November, 1790. Once through the Endeavour Strait, there would remain a sixteen-thousand-mile run back to England. The second British ship to enter this passage, the Pandora was returning with her commission only partially fulfilled. As the Admiralty's sailing orders had stipulated, Edwards's ship had been "fitted out for the express purpose of proceeding to the South Seas in order to endeavour to . . . bring in confinement to England . . . Fletcher Christian and his associates." Edwards had not found Fletcher Christian; but on board Pandora, securely confined in irons, were fourteen of the twenty-five mutineers of the Bounty.

News of the mutiny had reached England in an extraordinary manner—it had been brought by the Bounty's commander himself, Lieutenant William Bligh, who had appeared at the Admiralty, in Whitehall, on the morning of Monday, March 15, 1790, to give a full report. Almost a year earlier, before dawn on April 28, 1789, his ship, en route from Tahiti, had been seized by a small gang of armed men led by Master's Mate and Acting Lieutenant Fletcher Christian,

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK ULRIKSEN



One mutineer wrote that the Pandora's arrival in Tahiti filled him "with the utmost Joy"; given the ship's mission, his emotions were undoubtedly more complex.



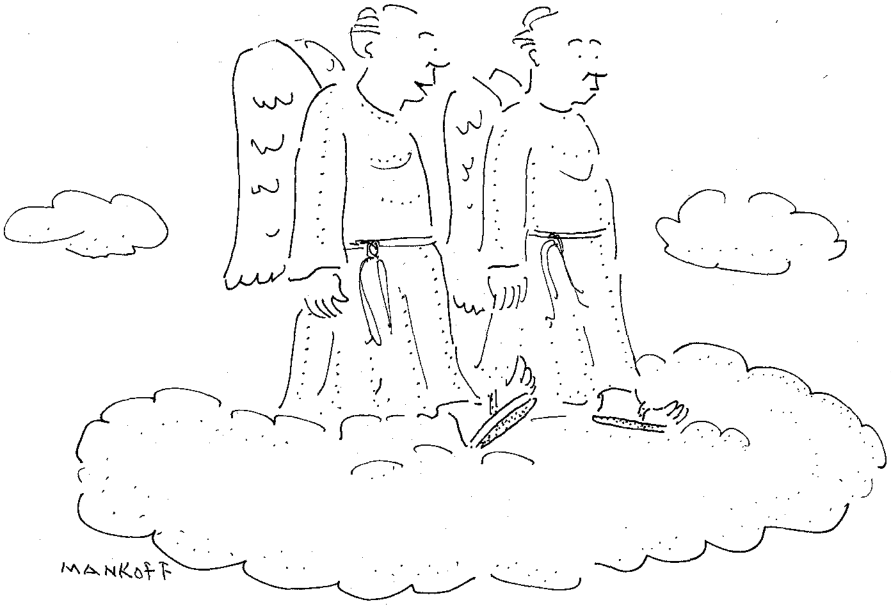
Bligh's protégé and his companion of two previous voyages. Taken from his cabin at gunpoint and led on deck wearing only his nightshirt, Bligh had been bound by the mizzenmast while Fletcher Christian stood guard over him with a bayonet. In the confusion and turmoil of the next few hours, Bligh, the ship's master, two midshipmen, and the ship's clerk had all been ordered into the Bounty's launch, a twenty-three-foot open boat, fitted with oars and two masts. To the amazement of Christian, a stream of volunteers had also grimly picked up bundles of possessions and gone over the side to join their captain.

The mutiny had been spontaneous, unpremeditated, and highly personal—the rash act of a man who had been drinking into the early hours of the morning and had come to find his commander's constant, critical mentoring unbearable. Like any young naval officer, Fletcher Christian had been destined for the commanding quarterdeck of a man-of-war—in view of which his inability to endure the verbal criticism of his superior officer on a peaceable breadfruit run in the South Pacific did not bode especially well. Despite the surprise tactics of the mutiny, which had carried many men unthinkingly along, and the obvious attractions of returning to Tahiti, fully half the Bounty's company had sought to join Bligh in the launch. When the small boat was finally cast off from the ship, she was crammed with nineteen men and provisions for five days, and was so overloaded that she showed no more than seven inches of freeboard in the calm morning waters—the mere length of a man's hand, as one survivor later recalled. Four other men loyal to Bligh were known to have been detained against their will on the Bounty. "Never fear, my lads, I'll do you justice if ever I reach England," Bligh had called out to the loyalists. As the launch set off into the Pacific, Bligh and his companions heard the cheerful, triumphant cry of "Huzzah for Otaheite" trailing behind their departing ship.

The Bounty had left Tahiti—Otaheite—only weeks before, having spent five months on this "Paradise of the World," as Bligh affectionately called the island, collecting breadfruit trees that were to be transplanted across oceans to the West Indies. Following the rigors of the ten-month outward voyage—and of the sailors' own hard lives in England—this tropical sojourn in a place of preëminent beauty, where food and sex could be found in casual abundance, was transforming. The sailors had adapted readily to the agreeable Tahitian culture. Most of the men had themselves tattooed, and a number had undergone the painful procedure of having their entire backsides blacked over—a Tahitian practice that bestowed much prestige, especially in the eyes of women. Bligh had allowed female guests to stay the night on ship, while the men stationed on shore, under the command of Fletcher Christian, enjoyed even greater freedom. The women of Tahiti, as Bligh later famously wrote, were "handsome, mild and cheerful in their manners and conversation, possessed of great sensibility, and have sufficient delicacy to make them admired and beloved." They were also sexually playful and available for the mere price of iron nails. Gonorrhea, or "venereals," had been introduced to the islanders by earlier ships—the French blamed the English, the English blamed the French—and, while Bligh sought to spare the islanders future infection by having the ship's surgeon monitor his men's health, all the men, at one time or another, appear to have enjoyed sexual partners. "I can only conjecture that the Pirates . . . have Ideally assured themselves of a more happy life among the Otaheitans than they could possibly have in England," Bligh wrote in a letter following his ordeal. Now, with the Bounty in their hands, Christian and the mutineers could return to the "happy island"—to the velvet-aired climate, the lush tropical landscape, the plentiful food, and the beautiful, compliant women.

Bligh, for his part, taking no pause for reflection and ignoring the fact that he had been consigned to almost certain death, instantly determined that he would return home to give King and country an account of Christian's crime. And this, improbably, he achieved, navigating his small, overburdened craft 3,618 nautical miles across the tempestuous Pacific, a feat that took forty-eight days, sailing by charts that existed only in his memory. Morning and evening, Bligh doled out particles of bread measured against the weight of pistol balls at one-twenty-fifth of a pound per man and the teaspoonfuls of water that he had calculated as the necessary rationing for the voyage. When on the morning of June 14, 1789, the launch entered the harbor of Coupang, a Dutch settlement on the island of Timor, many of his men were on the point of death; but, as for rations, "we had still remaining sufficient for eleven days," Bligh recorded with justifiable satisfaction. From Timor, Bligh and his men sailed under his command on a newly purchased vessel to Java; and then by merchantmen of the Dutch East India Company to Europe.

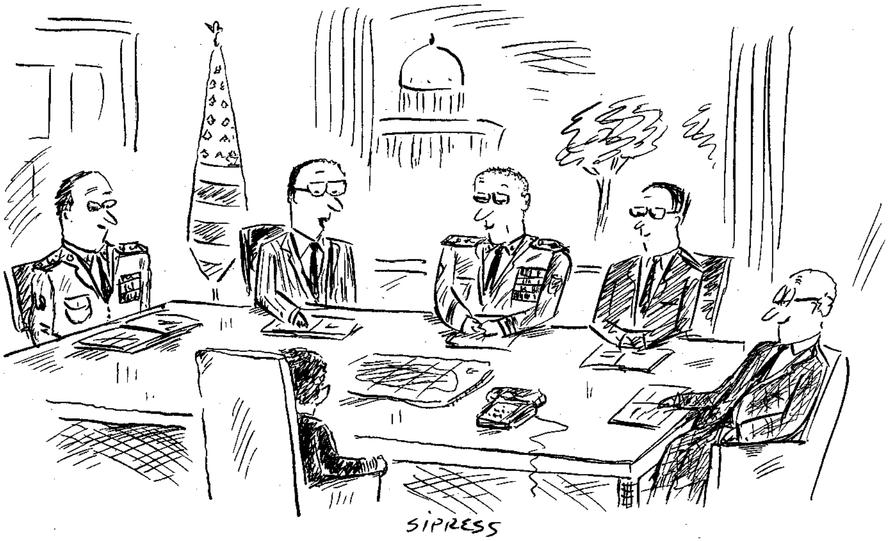
Thus, ten and a half months after his



"Oh, eternal life is fine, but what I really like is getting to wear flip-flops all the time."

ship was seized, Bligh presented himself at the Admiralty. "In navigating his little skiff through so dangerous a sea, his seamanship appears as matchless, as the undertaking seems beyond the verge of probability," was the assessment of the *English Chronicle*, echoing widespread sentiment. Highly conscious as he was of this achievement, Bligh's own immediate concern was for his future career, and for seeing that the "Villains" who had taken his ship were brought to justice. He had already dispatched descriptions of each of the mutineers to all conceivable ports of call, and, as he had noted in his log, one of the incentives to return to England quickly was to facilitate the Admiralty "in quest of the Pirates."

Captain Edwards, the officer charged with the commission of bringing Christian and his companions to justice, had been appointed commander of the Pandora on August 6, 1790, for what was expected to be Channel duty. A war was looming with Spain, and a general armament was under way. In late October, however, while his ship was undergoing a routine overhaul by carpenters, armorers, and caulkers in Chatham yard, Edwards was summoned "to Town" to attend their lordships of the Admiralty; and when he returned to Chatham he bore with him new orders. Instead of the Channel, he had been ordered to Otaheite in search of the Armed Vessel Bounty and her pirates. Entirely new preparations had to be made; instead of a voyage of mere months, the Pandora had to supply for well over a year. The Admiralty hoped that Edwards might fall in with not just the mutineers but the Bounty herself, and thus retake and return His Majesty's property. On this account, the Pandora was to carry double supplies, enough to equip two ships, as well as double the number of seamen and officers. As preparations proceeded, all supernumeraries—those with no ship duty—were withdrawn, and even the division of armed marines, customary on so long a venture, was dispensed with so as to accommodate the additional, skeleton crew. It was to be expected that any vessel embarking on so distant a voyage would be fully burdened, but the Pandora's double mission tested the ship's capacity to the limit, as well as the nerves and patience of her long-suffering men.



"Our intelligence shows that everybody loves us."

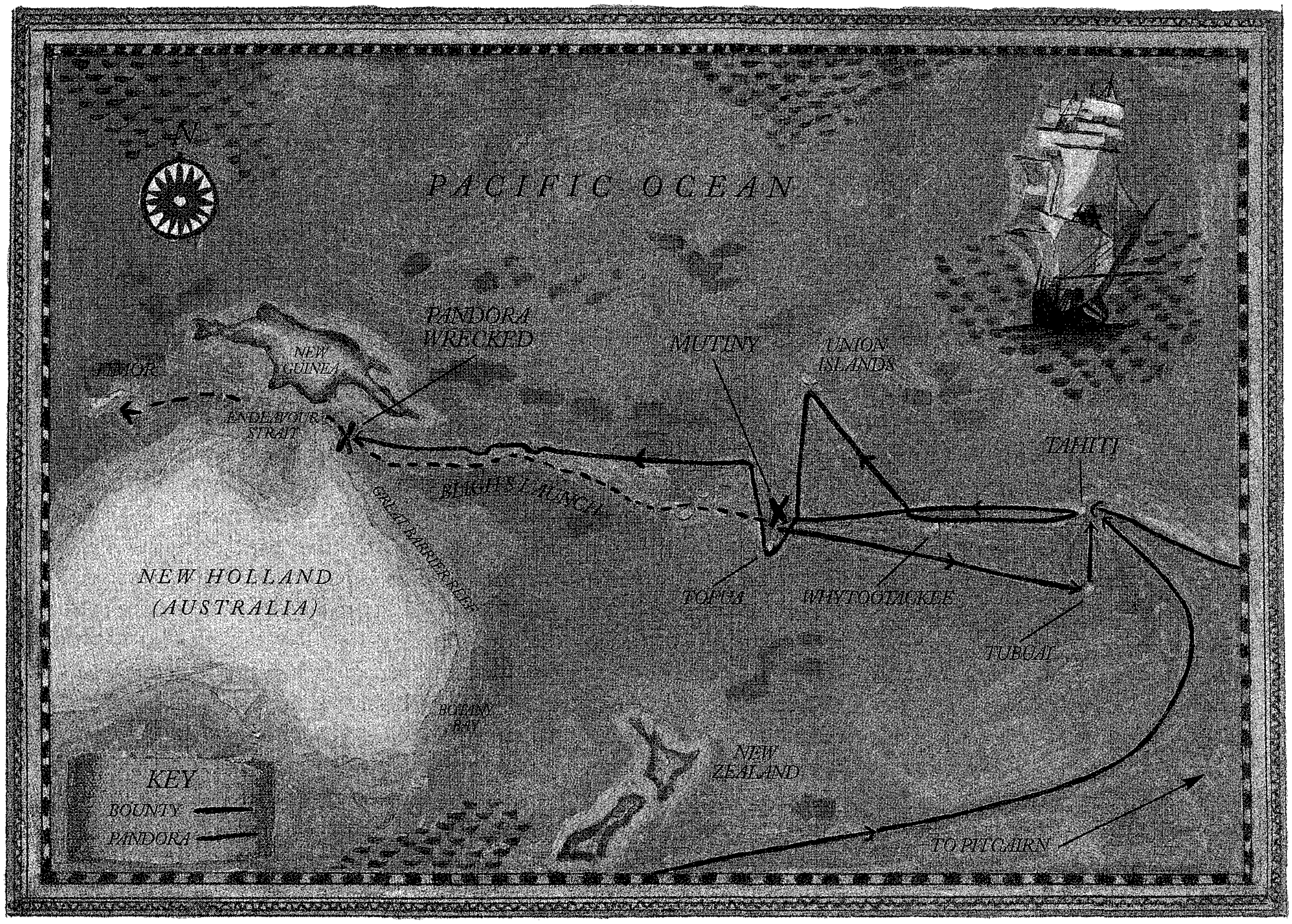
"What rendered our situation still more distressing, was the crowded state of the ship being filled to the hatchways with stores and provisions," the ship's surgeon, George Hamilton, wrote. "Every Officer's cabin, the Captain's not excepted, being filled with provisions and stores." Dividing walls and bulkheads had been dismantled, and tiny cabins were halved in size. When a low-burning but malevolent fever broke out on the ship, there was nowhere to accommodate the sick. The logistics of manning were further complicated by the preparations for war, which took precedence over the Pandora's mission. The armament, as Dr. Hamilton wrote somewhat indiscreetly, "prevented that particular attention to the choice of men which their Lordships so much wished." In other words, Edwards took what he was given.

Why Edward Edwards had been singled out for this commission from all officers in His Majesty's Navy remains a mystery. His career to date appears to have been exemplary, with swift advancement through the ranks; on the other hand, there is no indication of either experience or proven abilities particularly suggestive of his new commission. William Bligh had been chosen to command the Bounty in part because he had previously been to Tahiti and ranged the Pacific as sailing master of the Resolution, under that great navigator Captain James Cook, on his third and final voyage; and in part because he appears to have shown exceptional navigational acumen—subsequently demonstrated on his historic open-boat voyage.

Edward Edwards was the fifth of six children born to a well-off Lincolnshire landowner. Later, observed under the circumstances of a court-martial, he was noted by one onlooker to be "a fine, venerable-looking officer." Edwards had been commissioned lieutenant at the age of seventeen, and, since six years of service was required for such promotion, he must have gone to sea at the age of eleven. As first lieutenant of the Augusta, he had seen action in the American war, near Mud Island, in the Delaware. In 1780, at the age of thirty-eight, he was appointed post captain and took command of the sloop Hornet. In 1781, he was back in American waters, on the twenty-gun Narcissus. Here, he experienced a near mutiny of his own. As his ship patrolled the Eastern Seaboard, word came down through the quartermaster that an insurrection was planned for that night. Swiftly, all officers armed themselves, came on deck, and apprehended the conspirators, then made for New York Harbor. In the ensuing court-martial, it was revealed that forty-six men—a staggering number—had signed up for the mutiny, actually committing their names to paper. Their plan had been to secure their captain in irons and make for "Philadelphia or the first rebel fort." Once within sight of land, they intended to put the captain and other officers into the long boat with a compass, sail the ship to port, sell her and divide the spoils, and then wait out the American war before returning to England; the desire to dispose of officers in small boats was not therefore unique to the Bounty men. The court-martial's judgment against the would-be mutineers was severe: five were hanged; two were sentenced to floggings, of two hundred and five hundred lashes, respectively; and the leader was hanged in chains.

When the Pandora left Portsmouth on November 7, 1790, she carried a hundred and thirty-one souls, including Third Lieutenant Thomas Hayward, a former midshipman who had accompanied Bligh on his open-boat journey. Like Edwards, Hayward was, from personal experience, disinclined to be sympathetic to mutineers. With memories of the thirst, hunger, and horror of that voyage still fresh in his mind, Hayward was eager to assist in bringing to justice those responsible for his ordeal.

The Pandora enjoyed a relatively uneventful passage to the South Seas, the greatest danger being the reappearance of the "contagion" that had broken out before departure. The sick and convalescent benefitted from a treatment of hot tea and sugar, which, as Dr. Hamilton noted with some pride, was "the first time it has ever been introduced into his Majesty's service." For this alone, the Pandora's voyage was historic, the momentous commencement of the tradition that all ills could benefit from a nice cup of tea. Sailing by way of Tenerife, down the coast of South America and around Cape Horn, the Pandora was in "temperate, mild, and agreeable" latitudes by the end of February.



The lush, dramatic peaks of Tahiti were sighted on the morning of March 23, 1791. Closer in, the mountain cascades, the coconut palms, and the sparkling volcanic black beaches could be seen beyond the breakers. Accounts from ship after visiting ship had attempted to describe the vision-like beauty of this island rising into view from the Pacific. Now, as the Pandora cruised serenely through the blue water, bearing justice and vengeance, she was greeted by men canoeing and swimming toward her.

From a hill looking out over the sea, a young man had watched the Pandora's approach with keen emotion. Tanned and heavily tattooed, the youth could have passed for a Tahitian. Peter Heywood, however, was an Englishman, not an "Indian," and close observation would have revealed that one of the tattoos on his leg was the symbol of the Isle of Man. On the morning of the Pandora's arrival, Heywood was setting out from his cottage, picturesquely set amid citrus trees at the foot of a hill, for an excursion to the mountains, when word was brought that a ship was in view. Running to the hill behind his house, with its convenient lookout over the sea, he spotted the ship lying to only a few miles distant. Heywood later claimed that he had seen this sight "with the utmost Joy," but it is almost certain that his emotions were somewhat more complicated. Racing down the hill, he sent word of the news to the nearby home of his close friend midshipman George Stewart. By the time he and Stewart had splashed their way out to the ship, now securely anchored in Matavai Bay, Joseph Coleman, the Bounty's armorer, was already on board. Mistaken at first for natives, Heywood and Stewart identified themselves as formerly of the Bounty, whereupon Edwards placed them under arrest and had them led away for confinement.

Coleman, forty years old, "strong made," according to Bligh's description, and gray-haired, was also a veteran of Captain Cook's third voyage and one of the four men whom Bligh had attested were innocent of the mutiny and detained by Christian against their will. Once on board, Coleman immediately volunteered information on the other factions: Christian had left sixteen men on Tahiti, and two of them had already been responsible for each other's death. Charles Churchill, the master-at-arms and one of the most hardened of the mutineers, had been murdered by his messmate Mathew Thompson, an able seaman from the Isle of Wight; Churchill's Tahitian friends had, in revenge, murdered Thompson, whom they "offered as a sacrifice on their Altars," Edwards dispassionately reported.

From the Tahitians themselves, who crowded curiously on board, Edwards quickly ascertained the likely whereabouts of the eleven other mutineers. Some were still in the vicinity; others had sailed only the day before, in a thirty-foot schooner they had built themselves, with much effort and ingenuity, for Papara, a region on the south coast of Tahiti, where a majority of the remainder of the men had settled. The mastermind behind this ambitious undertaking had been James Morrison, the Bounty's boatswain's mate, and the eventual author of two important narratives of the events surrounding the mutiny. A few more men surrendered voluntarily. In the afternoon following the arrival of the Pandora, Richard Skinner, an able seaman and the Bounty's barber, came on board, and was later joined by Michael Byrn, the Bounty's half-blind Irish fiddler.

Over the ensuing weeks, parties under the command of Lieutenants Robert Corner and Thomas Hayward were dispatched throughout the island. The officers were aided in their search by a sinister character calling himself John Brown, an Englishman deposited on Tahiti the year before by another ship, the Mercury, on account of his troublesome ways, which had included carving up the face of a shipmate with a knife. Brown, it became clear, had not been on friendly terms with his compatriots. One group of fugitives, as Dr. Hamilton described it, "were discovered by Brown, who creeping up to the place where they were asleep, distinguished them from the natives by feeling their toes." (British toes, apparently, lacked the telltale spread of barefoot Tahitians'.)

At Papara, Edwards's men discovered that the mutineers had abandoned their schooner and fled to the mountain forest. Nevertheless, on the morning of March 29th, Lieutenant Corner returned with Morrison, Charles Norman, a carpenter's mate, and Thomas Ellison, an able seaman—"prisoners," as Edwards wrote in his log.

While searches for the remaining fugitives continued, under the guidance of the ever-helpful Brown, Captain Edwards and his officers got a taste of life in Tahiti. Their host was Tynah, the stately king, who stood nearly six feet four inches in height. At around forty years of age, he could remember William Bligh from both his visit to the island in 1777, with Captain Cook, and his return, eleven years later, with the Bounty. Tynah and his wife, Iddeeah, had formed a particularly close and enduring friendship with Bligh. Upon the Pandora's arrival, Edwards and his men had been greeted by the islanders with gifts, food, feasts, entertainment, dances, and offers of their women.

By Saturday, April 9th, the last fugitives had begun to trickle in. Henry Hilbrant, an able seaman from Hanover, Germany, and Thomas McIntosh, a young carpenter's mate from the North of England, were delivered on board; as the Tahitians predicted, they had been captured in the hill country above Papara. By the next evening, the roundup was complete, with the capture of able seamen Thomas Burkett, John Millward, John Sumner, and William Muspratt. They had been captured on shore when they came down from the mountains and, seeing the determined party led by their former shipmate Thomas Hayward, had laid down their arms. Taken in tow behind these last captives was Morrison's schooner, the Resolution, which was requisitioned by Edwards as a tender, or service vessel.

The ship's carpenters had constructed a kind of low hut at the rear of the Pandora's quarterdeck to serve as a prison, and, as Edwards reported to the Admiralty, for the captured men's "more effectual security airy & healthy situation." The fourteen prisoners now crowded into the eleven-by-eighteen-foot space assessed their circumstances somewhat differently. Exhibiting an unexpected, if sardonic, deference to the classics, they referred to their shallow, cramped quarters, with its two narrow air scuttles, as "Pandora's Box."

On deck outside, ship activities bustled around them. Carpenters and sailmakers were at work for the next stage of the long voyage, and routine disciplinary activities continued. On Sunday, the ship's company assembled for the weekly reading of the Articles of War: "Article XIX: If any Person in or belonging to the Fleet shall make or endeavour to make any mutinous Assembly upon any Pretence whatsoever, every Person offending herein, and being convicted thereof by the Sentence of the Court-martial, shall suffer Death." After the reading, three seamen were punished with a dozen lashes each, "for theft and drunkenness." It was a cloudy evening and had rained the day before. This was the last the captured men would see of Pacific skies for several months.

The journals of midshipmen Peter Heywood and George Stewart, confiscated from their sea chests, enabled Edwards to piece together the events after the seizure of the Bounty. Two days after Bligh and his loyalists were left in the Pacific, Fletcher Christian and his men cut up the ship's topsail to make jackets for the entire company. Soon all the breadfruit, a thousand and fifteen little pots and tubs of carefully nurtured seedlings—every one, as Bligh had wistfully reported, "in the most flourishing state"—were thrown overboard. More sails were cut up for uniform jackets, and the possessions of those who had been forced into the boat with Bligh were divided by lot among the ship's company. But, in a telling report made later by James Morrison, "it always happened that Mr. Christian's party were always better served than these who were thought to be disaffected."

Tensions among the men already

"Have you considered substance abuse?"

threatened to undermine Christian's tenuous control. In this state of affairs, the Bounty made for Tubuai, an island lying some three hundred and fifty miles south of Tahiti, and anchored there on May 25th, nearly a month after the mutiny.

"Notwithstanding they met with some opposition from the Natives they intended to settle on this Island," Edwards wrote in his official report, gleaning the diaries of Heywood and Stewart. "But after some time they perceived they were in want of several things Necessary for a settlement & which was the cause of disagreements & quarrels amongst themselves." One of the things they quarrelled most about was women.

Consequently, only a week after landing at Tubuai, the mutineers sailed back to Tahiti, where they had lived and loved for five memorable months while gathering Bligh's breadfruit. Here, as the men knew, their loyal Tahitian friends would give them all they required. The story they prepared was that they had fallen in with the great Captain Cook (in reality long dead), who was planning to make a settlement on the island of Whytootackee (Aitutaki); that Bligh had remained with his old commander and delegated Christian to sail with the Bounty for supplies. The Tahitians, ever generous and overjoyed at the news of Cook, whom they regarded with worshipful esteem, gave the mutineers hogs, goats, chickens, cats, dogs, and a variety of plants. More important, nine women, eight men, seven boys, and one young girl left with the Bounty when she returned to Tubuai.

For three months, the mutineers struggled to make a settlement on the tiny island. They began construction of a fort that measured some fifty yards square, surrounded by a kind of dry moat or ditch. A drawbridge was planned for the side facing the beach, with the Bounty's four-pounder cannons and swivel guns to be mounted on the walls. Patriotically, the mutineers had christened their fortress Fort George, after their king.

Again, there were early signs that this would not be a successful experiment. "On 5th July Some of the people began to be mutinous," according to an extract made by Edwards from Peter Heywood's journal, "& on 6th 2 of the Men were put in Irons by a Majority of Votes—& drunkenness, fighting & threatening each other's life was so common that those abaft were obliged to arm themselves with Pistols." The following day, an attempt was made to heal the growing breach, and "Articles were drawn up by Christian and Churchill specifying a mutual forgiveness of all past grievances which every Man was obliged to swear to & sign," according to an extract from Stewart's journal. "Mathew Thompson excepted who refused to comply." Despite this gesture, an inner circle evolved around Christian. When able seamen John Sumner and Matthew Quintal spent the night onshore without leave, declaring that they were now their own masters and would do as they pleased, Christian clapped the pistol he now always carried to the head of one, and ordered both men placed in leg irons.

Violence escalated without as well as within this fractious company, erupting as the Bounty men fought with the Tubuaians over property and women. In one particularly bloody encounter, Thomas Burkett was stabbed in the side by a spear, and Christian wounded himself on his own bayonet. When the conflict ended, sixty-six Tubuaians were dead, including six women, and the Bounty men were masters of the field. One of the Tahitian youths who had journeyed to Tubuai with his English friends, according to James Morrison, "desired leave to cut out the jaw bones of the kill'd to hang round the quarters of the Ship as Trophies," and was much displeased when this request was denied.

Eventually, a council was held, and it was agreed that those who chose to part ways with Christian could return to Tahiti. Each man would receive a musket, a pistol, a cutlass, a bayonet, a box of cartridges, and seventeen pounds of powder from the ship's arms and lead for ball—except the fiddler Michael Byrn, who, as James Morrison stated, "being blind and of a very troublesome disposition it was thought that arms put into his hands would be only helping him to do some mischief."

When the Bounty came to anchor again in Matavai Bay, after dark on September 21, 1789, fifteen men were disembarked. Christian and the eight men who had cast their lots with him did not bother to go ashore but departed secretly that night, quietly cutting the Bounty's anchor cable. Joseph Coleman, the most relentless loyalist, had once again been held against his will, because of his skill as an armorer; but, as the ship slipped away, he dove overboard and swam to land. At dawn, the sixteen men deposited on shore saw their ship hovering off Point Venus; by midmorning, she was gone. The abandoned men turned back to the beach, to the *taios,* or protective friends, they had made when here with Bligh, to domestic partners, to the building of new lives. And so they had worked their gardens, learned the customs and language of their hosts, fathered children and taken wives, until the day His Majesty's Ship Pandora loomed out of the morning mist to bring them home.

Now captured and penned inside Pandora's Box, the prisoners—mutineers and designated loyalists alike—listened in anguish as their wives and friends wailed and grieved under the Pandora's stern. Standing in canoes around the ship, the women enacted terrible rites of mourning, hammering at their own heads with sharp shells until the blood ran. As the day of departure approached, more canoes came from across the island, filling the harbor around the ship. Men and women stripped their clothes and cut their heads in grief, and, as the blood fell, cut again and cried aloud.

"This I believe was the first time that an Englishman got up his anchor, at the remotest part of the globe, with a heavy heart, to go home to his own country," wrote Dr. Hamilton—an astonishing admission from a naval official who had come in search of deserting mutineers.

On May 8, 1791, under pleasant breezes, the Pandora, recaulked and overhauled, left Tahiti, with the Resolution in tow. Edwards's commission was far from fulfilled. His Majesty's pirated ship was still missing, along with the ringleader of the mutiny and his most hard-core followers.

"Christian had been frequently heard to declare that he would search for an unknown or an uninhabited Island in which there was no harbor for Shipping, would run the Ship ashore, and get from her such things as would be useful to him and settle there," Edwards recorded in his official report to the Admiralty. "But this information was too vague to be follow'd in an immense Ocean strew'd with an almost innumerable number of known and unknown Islands"; the Pacific contains more than twenty thousand islands scattered over some seventy million square miles. Christian and the Bounty had left Tahiti in September, 1789—a nineteen-month head start, long enough to have taken the Bounty not only as far as North or South America but, in theory, around the globe.

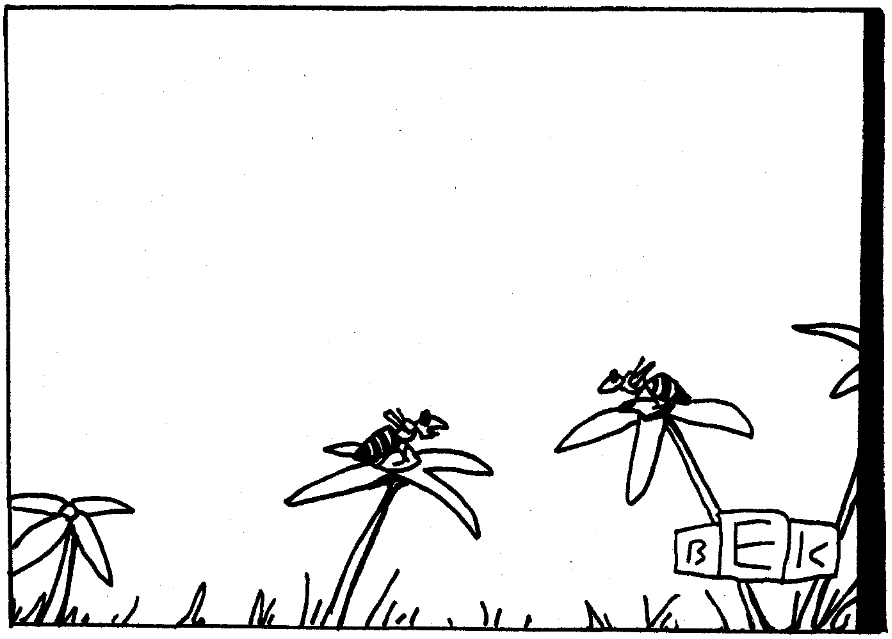
Edwards's sailing instructions from the Admiralty offered some guidance: if he could learn nothing further of the mutineers at Tahiti, he was to venture to Whytootackee, "calling, in your way, at Huaheine and Uliatea." If nothing was found here, he was to make a circuit of the neighboring islands. If nothing here, he was to proceed to the Friendly Islands; "and, having succeeded, or failed, in your endeavours . . . return to England, through Endeavour's Straits which seperate [sic] New Guinea from New Holland" (now Australia). Be mindful of prevailing winds, the Admiralty admonished, "there being no dependence (of which we have any certain knowledge) of passing the Straits after the month of September."

For roughly the next three months, Edwards scrupulously followed the Admiralty's itinerary from island to island. At each landfall, a uniformed officer disembarked and in the cloying heat tramped along the beach, offering presents and seeking information. Anchored offshore, the Pandora received the now customary canoeloads of eager visitors. Spears, clubs, shell ornaments, and other curios were collected, but no hint of the Bounty's whereabouts emerged.

On Palmerston Island, there had been a hopeful discovery: some spars and a yard marked "Bounty's Driver Yard," embossed with the Admiralty's broad arrow mark. But after several days it was realized that these tantalizing clues were only flotsam.

"The yard and these things lay upon the beach at high water Mark & were all eaten by the Sea Worm which is a strong presumption they were drifted there by the Waves," Edwards reported. It was concluded that they had drifted from Tubuai, where the mutineers had reported that the Bounty had lost most of her spars. These few odds and ends of worm-eaten wood were all that was ever found by the Pandora of His Majesty's Armed Vessel Bounty.

The fruitless search apart, morale on board had been further lowered by the discovery, as Dr. Hamilton put it, "that the ladies of Otaheite had left us many warm tokens of their affection." The men confined within Pandora's Box were also far from well. In the stifling prison, according to Morrison, "the Sweat frequently ran in Streams to the scuppers," and vermin infested their clothing and bedding. The irons locked on their hands



"If they knew what really went on in hives, they'd never eat honey again."

and legs chafed them badly, so much so that while still at Matavai Joseph Coleman's legs had swollen alarmingly, and the arms of Thomas McIntosh, the carpenter's mate, and able seaman Thomas Ellison had become badly "galled." To the complaint that the irons were causing their wrists to swell, Lieutenant John Larkan had replied that "they were not intended to fit like Gloves." Edwards had an obsessive fear that the mutineers might "taint" his crew, and under threat of severe punishment had forbidden any communication between the parties. But from notes he made it seems he was unsuccessful.

"Great difficulty created in keeping the Mutineers from conversing with the crew," Edwards had jotted down, elsewhere noting that one of his lieutenants suspected that the prisoners had "carried on a correspondence with some of our people by Letter."

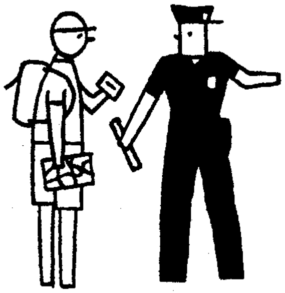
From the Duke of York's Island, down to the Union Islands (Tokelau), on to the Samoas, the Pandora continued her futile search. To aid in making rough landfalls, Lieutenants Corner and Hayward donned cork jackets and plunged boldly into the surf ahead of the landing boats. Parakeets were purchased on one island, splendid birds resembling peacocks on another, and on others still the use of the islands' women. The men saw striking sights—the skeleton of a whale, for example, and a deserted temple with an altar piled with white shells, and a company of men tattooed with images of fish and birds "so that every man was a moving landscape." They even discovered previously unknown islands, whose newly bestowed names formed a satisfying addition to the report Edwards eventually turned over to the Admiralty. In short, the Pandora discovered a great deal—but nothing that pertained to the missing mutineers and the Bounty.

By early August, "thinking it time to return to England," Edwards struck north to Wallis Island and then west for the long run to the Endeavour Strait, the route mandated by the Admiralty out of the Pacific—homeward bound. He and his men had endured many mishaps in reaching this point. The ship's cutter, along with her small crew, had vanished into stormy weather, never to be seen again; the schooner that the mutineers had built, with her crew of nine, had also gone missing, and did not reappear for several months; and the ship's company had suffered theft, assaults, and such indignities as being stripped naked by the natives of the Friendly Islands. Now, immediately ahead, between New Holland and New Guinea, lay the most daunting stretch of the entire voyage—the navigation of the reef-strewn Endeavour Strait.

Despite the fact that the Dutch East India Company was securely stationed in settlements and towns from Java to Timor, very little was known by Europeans of this important stretch of water, which linked the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. The Spanish captain Luis Baez de Torres, on the San Pedrico, made the first documented passage, in 1606, in part by accident, having been forced by strong winds to divert his course from New Guinea's northern to her southern coast, where he had struck southwest and found a safe channel through the strait into the Indian Ocean. In an era when shipping routes were closely guarded national secrets, Torres's achievement was not publicized; thus when Lieutenant James Cook approached the eastern coast of New Holland in the Endeavour as late as 1770, he was all but sailing blind.

Following what is now the Queensland shoreline, Cook sailed up the coast of New Holland, surveying and recording as he went. Away to the east, out of view and beyond the limits of all knowledge, the Great Barrier Reef ran roughly parallel to his course. Cook, without realizing it, was already deep in treacherous waters. While at its southern extremity the reef lay well to seaward, further north it narrowed toward the coast. The Endeavour was moving inexorably into a trap, funnelling into an increasingly narrow passage that would soon admit neither seaway nor leeway. On the night of June 10, 1770, some eight hundred miles up this passage, the Endeavour came to a grinding, crunching halt on a small reef off a point that Cook would subsequently, and appropriately, name Cape Tribulation.

The damage sustained by the Endeavour was severe, and Cook spent almost



THE PIGEONS AND THE GIRLS

Quite early in the day I saw them,
Side by side; perched on a twig
Above the traffic, those two pigeons,
They raised with a single motion
Their heads toward the light.

I must have raised mine also
To have so rapidly glimpsed
The beaks they lifted, in unison,
Up to the light that made such gleams
Glide across the troubled cars.

Two girls came to the vacant pool,
Stepping tentatively down the stair,
And one dipped a foot into the water;
Still she held the other by the hand,
For the other was thin, she limped,

A thigh or hip bone was not working right.
The girl who led this other one along—

A perfect saint, at such a distance:
Firm breasts, the fair hair swept up,
A white towel knotted round her waist.

Quite ordinary motions, daily gestures,
Apparently disturb the sheet of time.
Becoming very ancient, birds and people
Fold back the sheet; locked in traffic,
Or waterborne, you hardly notice.

But watch too long, prone among junipers,
The formal cloud, while dragonflies
Briskly penetrate, to no purpose, air—
Girl and pigeon, stripping the sheet off,
Wake up to immortality's aroma.

Then hear Spirit settle in its woodland.
In its throat a growl, a heavy breathing;
See sprayed from great eager eyes the sparkle,
Bushes whisked apart. That was Dios
Vanished into the open, with a spurting wand.

—*Christopher Middleton*

two months repairing his ship before he could venture on, dogged by the unpleasant awareness that worse might lie ahead. There was, however, nothing now to be done. The prospect of reversing in tight straits a great ship of sail and heading back the way he had come, beating against the wind, was an option not even to be contemplated except in the last and most desperate resort. Willingly or not, he was committed to his route. When, in August, the Endeavour at last rounded the northern tip of New Holland, Cook was a very relieved man.

The route the Endeavour had pioneered by happenstance confirmed the existence of the strait, but future sailors could hardly be recommended to follow the erratic and unhappy track that had shoaled the era's finest navigator. The Admiralty remained keenly interested in investigating and surveying the Endeavour Strait, and in discovering a safe route through it. Thus when Lieutenant William Bligh set forth in the Bounty, the Admiralty had ordered him to return from Tahiti by way of the strait. It would later be reported by Fletcher Christian's shipmates that Christian had been as "much afraid of the Endeavour Straits as any child is of the rod," and had complained that "in going through Endeavour Straits, I am sure the ship will be a hell." It is perhaps significant that the mutiny took place off the island of Tofua, at the very point where the Bounty had turned west for the final approach to this difficult passage.

Bligh, deprived of his ship, had commanded the Bounty launch along this route, continually taking notes and making sketches. In seeking to enter the inner reef from the Coral Sea, he had aimed for the latitude of Providential Channel, through which he knew Cook had safely passed. Guided only by his quadrant, compass, and broken sextant, Bligh had eventually passed through another channel, just some ten miles further south.

The information from these few and erratic voyages was all Edwards had to steer by as he, too, approached the reef and the strait in late August of 1791. William Bligh, for one, had no illusions about Edwards's chances. "Edwards would never return, as he did not know the navigation of Endeavour Straits," he stated repeatedly.

On the afternoon of August 25th, the Pandora was shuttling carefully between shoals and reefs. Eschewing the proved dangers of Cook's route through the inner reef, Edwards had determined to take the outer route. His plan was to sail unobstructed through the Coral Sea toward the reef system's northern end, and to find a channel that would allow him to pass through and proceed westward.

"Before noon we saw more breakers which proved to be one of those half-formed islands enclosing a lagoon, the reef of which was composed principally of very large stones, but a sandbank was seen from the mast head extending to the Southward of it," Edwards reported. Skirting this, he saw "another reef bearing about S.W. by South." The afternoon was passing, and by night he was still caught in the maze of reefs, one in particular extending "a considerable way to the N.W.," a long, apparently endless barrier through which no route was admitted, running for close to two hundred miles—although this last point Edwards did not know. Standing off throughout the night, at daylight Edwards turned south, believing that routes to the north would be "obstructed."

Approaching the Murray Islands in latitude 9° 57' south, Edwards continued working southward. On the morning of August 28th, a possible channel was spied, and Edwards dispatched Lieutenant Corner in one of the ship's yawls to investigate. It was a quarter to five in the evening when Corner signalled that the route was navigable. "We sounded frequently but had no ground at 110 fathoms," Edwards reported. At twenty past seven, the yawl returned to the Pandora, and at the same time soundings indicated a drastic drop to fifty fathoms of water; then, before sails could be trimmed, three fathoms was sounded on the starboard side.

"On the evening of the 29th August the Pandora went on a Reef," James Morrison, the boat builder, wrote afterward. "I might say how, but it would be to no purpose"; Morrison had prefaced this report with a classical flourish—"*Vidi et Scio*" ("I saw and I know"). Despite soundings, despite advance reconnaissance, despite both his fear and his precautions, Edwards had run his ship aground.

"The ship struck so violently on the Reef that the carpenters reported that she made 18 Inches of water in 5 Minutes," the captain wrote in his Admiralty report. "In 5 minutes after there was 4 feet of water in the hold." Still chained fast in the darkness of Pandora's Box, the fourteen prisoners could only listen as sounds of imminent disaster broke around them—cries, running feet, the heavy, confused splash of a sail drawn under the broken hull in an attempt to hold the leak, the ineffectual working of the pumps, and more cries that spread the news that there was now nine feet of water in the hold.

"In this miserable situation, with an expected Death before our Eyes, without the least Hope of relief & in the most trying state of suspense, we spent the Night," Peter Heywood wrote in a letter to his mother. The water had now risen to the coamings, or hatch borders, while feet tramped overhead across the prison roof.

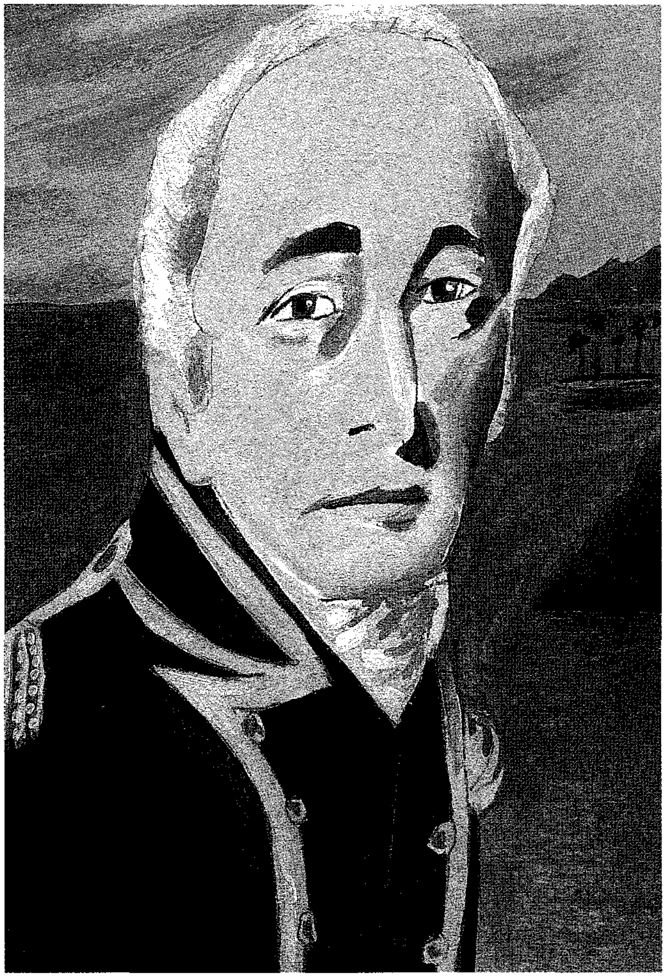
"I'll be damned if they shall go without us," someone on deck was heard to say, speaking, as it seemed to the prisoners, of the officers who were heading to the boats. The ship booms were being cut loose to make a raft, and a topmast thundered onto the deck, killing a man; another was killed by a runaway cannon. High-breaking surf around the ship hampered all movement, and compelled the lifeboats in the black water to stay well clear. "It was an exceeding dark, stormy night," as Dr. Hamilton recorded.

The confusion continued until dawn, when the prisoners were able to observe through the scuttle armed officers making their way across the top of their prison to the stern ladders, where the boats now awaited. Suddenly, the armorer's mate, Joseph Hodges, appeared at the prison entrance to remove their fetters. Once down in the box, Hodges freed Muspratt and Skinner, who immediately scrambled out through the scuttle, along with Byrn, who had not been in irons; in his haste to break out, Skinner left with his handcuffs still on.

From above, an unseen hand closed and barred the scuttle again. Trapped with the prisoners, Hodges continued to work, striking off the irons in rapid succession, while the confined men renewed their pleas for mercy.

"I beg'd of the Master at Arms to leave the Scuttle open," Morrison wrote, "when he answered 'Never fear my boys we'll all go to Hell together.'"

As the master-at-arms spoke, the Pandora made a fatal sally, rolling to port and spilling him and the sentinels into the water; Morrison claims he could see Edwards swimming toward the ship's pinnace. Edwards's subsequent long report of the wreck and abandonment of his ship makes no mention of the prisoners.



William Bligh, the Bounty's ill-fated commander.

With the ship under water as far as the mainmast, Pandora's Box had begun to fill. Hen coops, spars, booms—anything that would float had been cut loose and flung overboard as a possible lifesaver. Passing over the top of the prison roof on his way into the water, William Moulter, the boatswain's mate, heard the trapped men's cries; and his last action before he went overboard was to draw the bolt and hurl the scuttle away.

Scrambling inside the box, the men fought their way toward the light and air. Peter Heywood was one of the last to get out, and when he emerged in the sea he could see nothing above the water but the Pandora's crosstrees. All around him, men floundered and called for help, lurching to take hold of anything afloat. A gangway floated up with Muspratt riding on one end. Coleman, Burkett, and Lieutenant Corner were perched on top of the old prison. Heywood, stripped stark naked, had grasped a floating plank.

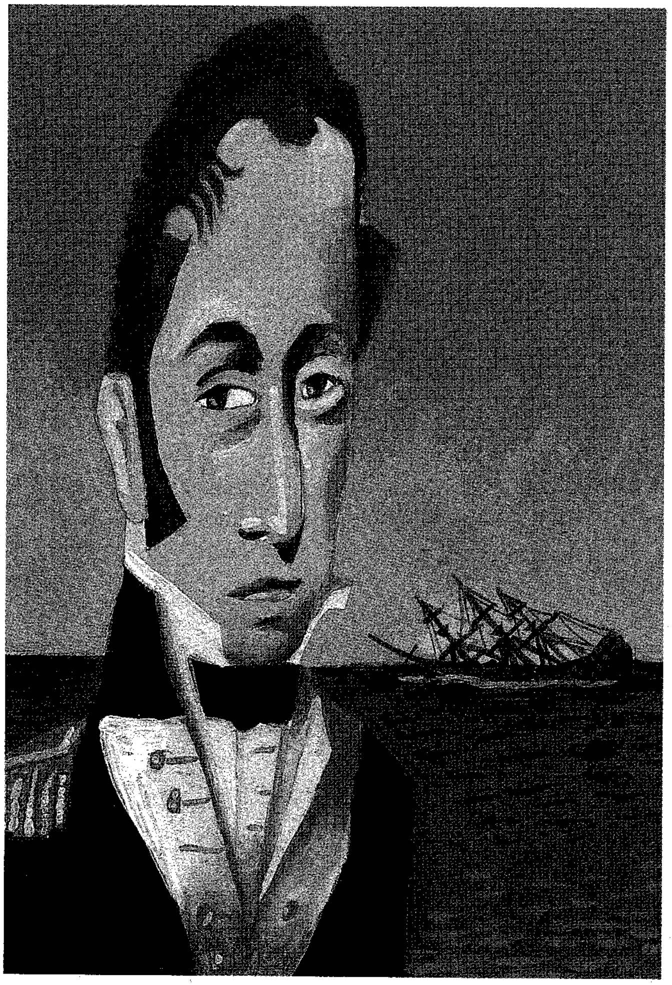
"The cries of the men drowning in the water was at first awful in the extreme," Hamilton wrote, "but as they sunk, and became faint, it died away by degrees."

Slowly, the boats circled the wreckage, gathering up distressed men as they found them. After an hour and a half in the water, Morrison was picked up by the master's mate, and found Peter Heywood already on board. One by one, the boats made their way to a sandy key some three miles distant, and when a muster was held it was discovered that eighty-nine of the ship's company and ten prisoners were accounted for; thirty-one of the company and four prisoners had drowned—but, as Morrison pointedly noted, "all the Officers were Saved." Of the prisoners, Richard Skinner had gone down in handcuffs, along with John Sumner and Peter Heywood's closest friend, George Stewart, both of whom had been struck and killed by a falling gangway; Henry Hilbrant, also still in irons, had never made it out of Pandora's Box. On the day following the disaster, a boat was sent back to what remained of the ship, to see what could be salvaged. Nothing much was gained, and the boat returned with the head of the topgallant mast, some rigging, the chain of the lightning conductor—and the ship's cat, which had made its way to the crosstrees.

As the blazing Pacific sun rose over the sandy key, Edwards took a survey of his new situation. Hamilton recorded, "Providentially a small barrel of water, a cag of wine, some biscuit, and a few muskets and cartouch boxes, had been thrown into the boat." Edwards decided upon a daily ration of three ounces of bread, two small glasses of water and one of wine, with the occasional addition of an ounce of "portable soup," or dried bouillon, and half an ounce of essence of malt. His plan was to sail for the Dutch East Indies settlement in Timor—the same port that had received Bligh and his company at the end of their ordeal in the Bounty's launch. The irony that the Pandora's boats were to replicate part of Bligh's famous voyage is unlikely to have escaped anyone, least of all Thomas Hayward, who had been with Bligh and was thus about to embark on his second Pacific open-boat journey in a little more than two years. A voyage of some eleven hundred miles lay ahead.

On August 31st, the third day after the Pandora was abandoned, the little squadron—consisting of the ship's yawls and launch and led by Captain Edwards in the pinnace—set out. The prisoners had been carefully apportioned among the vessels. Peter Heywood, in the launch under the sympathetic Lieutenant Corner, had drawn what was probably the happiest boat, while James Morrison, as he reported, "had the good or evil fortune, call it which you please, to go in the Pinnace with Capt. Edwards."

Proceeding northwest, the boats now at last passed through the reef by way of a channel that, as Edwards reported to the Admiralty, was "better than any hitherto known"—a discovery that had come rather late in the day. The following morning, they reached the desolate coast of New Holland. Here the parched men had the rare good fortune to find a spring rushing on to the beach. The prisoners in particular were tortured by the sun, their skin, pale and tender after almost five months of confinement, having quickly burned and blistered—so that they appeared "as if dipped in large tubs of boiling water," Peter Heywood wrote in another family letter.


Mutineer (and later Captain) Peter Heywood.

Still in search of water, the company passed the night off a small island, where they were awakened by the howling of dingo dogs, which they mistook for wolves. On the afternoon of September 2nd, they passed a series of distinctive islands that were recognized from Bligh's account and from a chart made during his boat journey. By evening, the boats were in sight of the northernmost tip of New Holland, and the end of the strait. Ahead was the Indian Ocean and a thousand-mile run to Timor.

"It is unnecessary to relate our particular sufferings in the Boats during our run to Timor," Edwards wrote, "and is sufficient to observe that we suffered more from heat & thirst than from hunger." The weather, at least, was good, and the overloaded boats made satisfying progress; at dawn on September 16th, they at last reached Timor. Edwards had lost no men on the journey, although they had been reduced to drinking the blood of captured birds and their own urine. Welcomed by the Dutch authorities, the Pandora survivors were received into the settlement, where they awaited repatriation—and discovered that they were not the only distressed British sailors. Some months earlier, seven men, a woman, and two children had arrived at the fort in a six-oared cutter, saying that they were part of the crew and passengers of a wrecked brig called the Neptune. They, too, had been treated with great compassion by the Dutch authorities. And, when Edwards and his men came ashore, the kind Dutchmen hastened to bring their guests the good news that their captain had arrived.

"What Captain! dam'me, we have no Captain," Hamilton reports one of them had unwisely exclaimed. The small party, it turned out, had not been shipwrecked but were convicts who had made a daring escape by island-hopping up the coast all the way from Botany Bay. ("They were discovered to be Cheats," as the mutineer Morrison self-righteously observed.) Although the convicts left no record or charts of this feat, they had accomplished the first known navigation of the reef's entire inner passage. Among the Bounty, the Pandora, and the Botany Bay convicts, three epic open-boat voyages had been accomplished in a little more than two years.

The Pandora herself eventually sank through the blue depths to a hundred feet, gently keeled some thirty-four degrees, and settled on the ocean floor; and, as the century passed, she was buffeted by strong tides and currents that helped fill her with sediment and sand. Decaying, she was eaten by borers and became encased in the detritus of busy, unflagging marine life. Gradually, her outlines blurred, and in 1977, when divers found her resting place, the most immediately visible signs of her presence were large, improbably shaped encrustations masking such indestructible objects as cannon, anchors, and a Brodie stove.

The wreck of the Pandora was discovered by design, not happenstance. John Heyer, a filmmaker, and Steve Domm, a naturalist, culling information from Edwards's log and report, and even from Dr. Hamilton's lubberly account, mapped out the probable area of the ship's undoing. An aerial magnetometer survey, courtesy of the Royal Australian Air Force, was made over the general area. Underwater searches were conducted where the R.A.A.F. Neptune dropped marker flares, and eventually the enterprise succeeded. Placed under the protection of the Historic Shipwrecks Act of 1976, the Pandora site began to be excavated in earnest in 1983; the last active field season ended in 1999, owing to budget concerns and the need to conserve and manage the considerable material discovered.

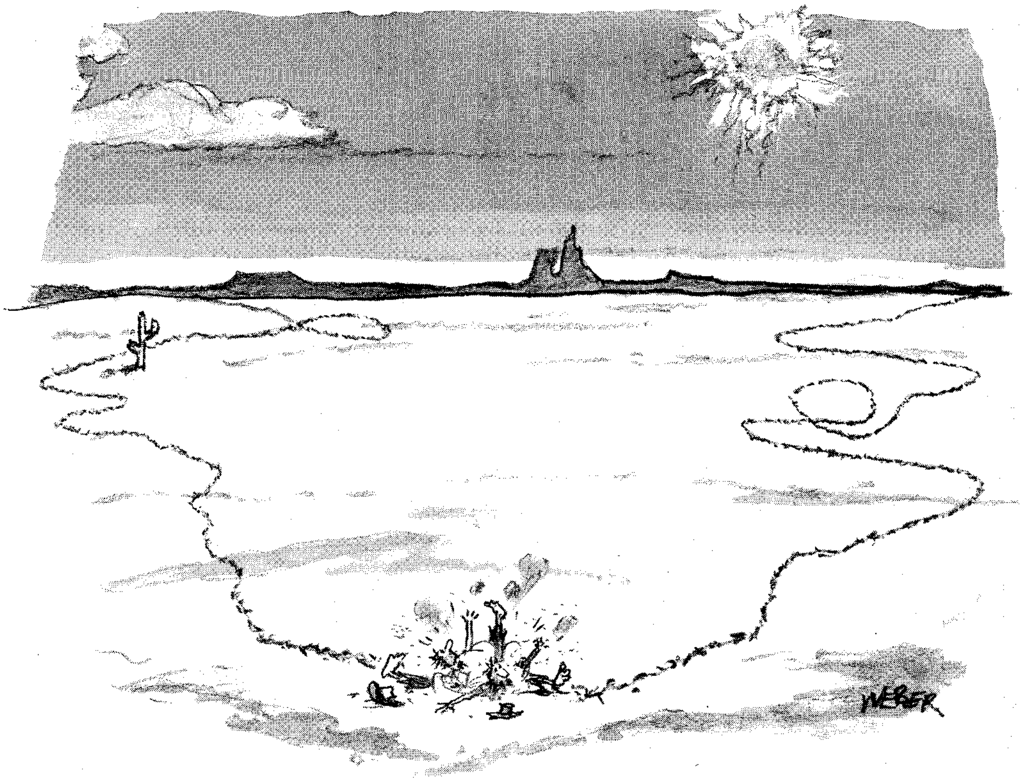
Today, the relics of the Pandora are displayed in evocative surroundings in the Museum of Tropical Queensland, situated on the water's edge in Townsville, an attractive, palmy town with a laid-back, vaguely colonial air. Protective cases contain such personal items as Dr. Hamilton's tourniquet clasp, his gold-and-silver fob watch, and the cream, fluted dinner plates of Captain Edwards. These last, found packed in sawdust for the voyage, appear to have been unused and are thought to have been his "best" or his spare service. More remarkable was the discovery of numerous Polynesian artifacts—clubs, shell ornaments, stone food pounders, and adzes.

"They were curios, collected by the officers and sailors," Peter Gesner, the museum's senior curator of Maritime Heritage and director of the Pandora project, told me. A large man with broad, almost Slavic features, he has been in charge of the project since its inception, and has been "in the field" in all diving seasons. His office windows were determinedly shuttered with blinds, "so I don't have to be reminded that all that's outside," he said, nodding toward the cheerful marina.

Edwards's misfortune produced the most important shipwreck in the Southern Hemisphere. Sealed in the anaerobic environment of accumulated sand, an estimated thirty per cent of the Pandora's wooden hull survives intact. The divers, limited to underwater forays of not more than forty-five minutes, painstakingly retrieved a scattered hoard of objects reflecting eighteenth-century British naval life. Not only the expected nautical apparatus—cannon, carronades, navigational equipment, ballast iron, and parts of the fatal pumps that had served the Pandora so ill—but also more intimate memorabilia. To which officer had belonged the miniature and finely engraved seal depicting Atlas weighed down by the mass of the world? A cupboard-size space, measuring six feet square and five feet eight inches high, that served as the cabin of Lieutenant John Larkan—identified by his brass nametag—contained delicate and expensive wineglasses; did he have friends visit his tiny cabin, or did he carry the glasses carefully into the wardroom for drinks and dinner? Brass buttons embossed with the insignia of an anchor fouled in line belonged to warrant officers.

"We know these objects are from the officers' quarters," Gesner said. They were found on the lower deck, grouped in clusters that indicated former cabin partitions. "What we would like to do, as a Stage 3, is get to the fo'c'sle—you know, the sailors' quarters. If you look at the Pandora's muster, you will see that for the ordinary bloke it was quite random who eventually went along. Because of the armament, men were being pulled off left and right for other ships. So here are these guys suddenly off to the Pacific. We don't know if they were excited or just unlucky to be stuck with a long voyage. You know, they were all set to go off for a few weeks to the Channel, and now they're gone for over a year. It would be nice to know what sort of things these ordinary blokes took with them—this is really about being away for a long time and what they took with them to make them feel at home."

Among the excavation team's more unexpected discoveries were the skeletal remains of three men, whom Gesner hopes to identify from the thirty-one known to have died; the location of the remains makes it almost certain that they were not mutineers. Two were found together outside the cabins of Dr. Hamilton and Lieutenant Larkan—quite probably the two men killed on deck by loose or falling equipment before the Pandora was abandoned, and taken belowdecks for later burial. The third was found in the captain's storeroom, presumably trapped there and drowned as the ship went down: the purser's steward, Robert Bowler? Or the carpenter's mate Robert Brown, trying to make repairs? Analysis of the bones gives estimated ages of seventeen, twenty-two, and twenty-eight years at the time of death—information that could have provided immediately useful clues, as naval



"Oops."

muster books contained columns for entering each man's age, along with his name, rank, and place of origin. Such detailed information, however, the laconic Captain Edwards had declined to enter fully in the Pandora's papers, and, like many a busy officer, had been somewhat lazy with his paperwork, entering only each man's name and rank. (The ever-fastidious William Bligh generally made out his musters in full, noting his men's age and place of origin—a gift for future researchers.)

Regarding Edwards's seamanship, Gesner remarked, "Before you make any judgment against him, go up there and sit on Pandora Entrance"—the channel through which Edwards had hoped to take his ship. "The currents are very strong, they can come pushing past you. A ship needs a good anchor to hold position and not get blown onto a reef." These same currents had once tossed Gesner and another diver without warning from a depth of a hundred feet to the surface, landing the men in a decompression chamber for four hours. He allowed, however, that Edwards had complicated matters by sailing late in the day.

Peter Illidge, who as the Pandora project's operations manager had been in charge of the daunting logistics of the team's dive work, was more critical. "Edwards was sailing west and looking into the sun," he said. Illidge was unimpressed with Lieutenant Corner's careful reconnaissance in the ship's yawl: "Edwards relied on the guy in the boat, who's about six feet off the water—he's probably taking soundings, but that is not going to show the reef ahead. Edwards had been in the Pacific by then for five months. He should have learned a thing or two."

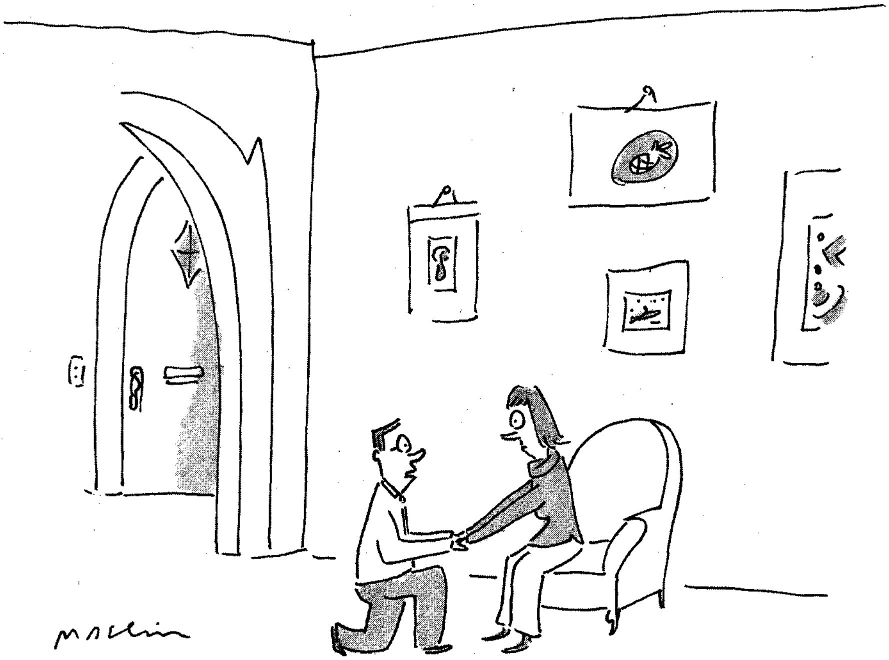
After the Pandora, the next ship to attempt the Endeavour Strait was H.M.S. Providence, under the command of now Captain William Bligh. Less than a year after Edwards's departure—and before word of his success or failure had reached England—Bligh set out again for the South Seas. Once again, he had been commissioned to collect breadfruit in Tahiti, and once again his sailing orders stipulated that he return by way of the Endeavour Strait.

Of middle height, with black hair and skin of "an ivory or marble whiteness," William Bligh was now thirty-six years old. Like most of his profession, he had been at sea for much of his life; his name first appears in naval books when he was seven years old, although, under the custom of the times, this did not necessarily mean he had actually served on a voyage. Prior to the commission of the Bounty, the most momentous landmark in his career had been his service as sailing master under Captain Cook, where he had learned not just navigation and seamanship but Cook's innovative man-management. Bligh's own practices on the Bounty—three watches instead of the traditional two, so that his men could enjoy eight unbroken hours of sleep; an insistence on cleanliness and fresh air; vigilant concern with his men's diet—had all been legacies of his tutelage under Cook. On the Providence, as on the Bounty, Bligh punished his men with fewer floggings than were administered on almost any other British naval ship venturing into the Pacific in this era.

The Providence, accompanied by her tender, the Assistant, left Spithead on August 3, 1791, and Bligh's log was soon recording the familiar bustle of cleaning, drying, and airing of his ship; and his orders were given with the same uncompromising certitude with which he had commanded the Bounty. "My officers will become habituated to that attention which very few indeed are acquainted is necessary in these Voyages," Bligh reported to Sir Joseph Banks, the patron of both breadfruit expeditions. Yet, for all Bligh's show of undaunted leadership, he was now a very ill man. Four weeks out, as the ships rode at anchor off Tenerife, they were assailed by a strange parching heat that seemed exhaled from the mountainous land. "At Night light airs off the High land, heated as if they had passed through fire," Bligh wrote in his log. "Myself most materially felt the effect; I was seized with a Violent Fever." The raging fever and "most dreadful Head Ach" mounted alarmingly, and soon Bligh found it necessary to relieve himself of command—a drastic step. This precaution had been taken, as he himself logged, "while I had power to think" in order to insure that the service of the ships "might go on with a greater certainty of success in case of my death."

As the two vessels headed south, Bligh kept a record of his health in his log: "continued very ill"; "very ill"; "I still continue very ill." A week later, off Santiago, he composed a letter to his wife.

"My dear Betsy," he dictated, "I beg you will not be alarmed at not seeing my own writing." The handwriting was that



"I'm not asking for your hand in marriage—I'm asking you to pull me up off the floor."

• •

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of the ship's surgeon, who had advised Bligh against attempting even a letter. He was afflicted again with a headache so severe that the least noise "distracted" his brain, and orders were given to keep a profound silence on the ship; in his log Bligh noted how "wonderfully & kindly" this silence was preserved. His condition was "of a nervous kind," Bligh told his wife, referring to the blinding headaches that deprived him "of reason," the chills and shaking fever that prostrated him; in reality, he was almost certainly suffering from a vicious bout of recurring malaria, which he had caught as long as two years earlier, when he and the companions of his boat voyage were compelled to sojourn in the infamously pestilential Batavia (Jakarta) on their way back to England. Significantly, the two other Bounty men who sailed with the Providence, Lawrence Lebogue and Bligh's servant, John Smith, also suffered from "Batavia fever" on the voyage.

"God bless you my Dear Love & my little angels," Bligh had scrawled in his own hand as a footnote to the surgeon's letter. The voyage was but five weeks out; home was nearly two years away.

The Providence and the Assistant reached Tahiti on April 9, 1792. In squally weather, the ships worked into Matavai Bay and anchored. Canoes soon appeared, and in one a native man was seen by Bligh's quick eyes to be wearing a European shirt. This seemingly trivial detail proved to be a harbinger of great and tragic changes wrought in this paradise of the world. The islanders had received more than iron technology from their European visitors; venereal disease was now rampant, and Bligh observed a new fondness among the islanders for liquor. A small arsenal of firearms, gleaned from various ships, was a proud and closely guarded treasure. The handsome Tahitians were dressed in sailors' ragged cast-offs, and it was difficult to find, as Bligh noted with sadness, the gleaming white bark cloth that they had worn "with much elegance." Their very language had changed.

"Our country Men must have taken great pains to have taught them such vile blackguard expressions as are in the mouth of every Otaheitan," Bligh wrote in his log. Despite these disappointments, Bligh was heartened by the welcome he received from old friends.

"We all thank God that you are safe," Bligh was greeted. "We were told you were put into a little Boat & set a drift without anything to eat or drink, and that you must perish."

Over the three months in which the ships collected and nursed their breadfruit, Bligh learned much about the Tahitian life of the mutineers. He made note, as he logged, of his "satisfaction and pleasure in hearing that all these Mutineers were taken by Captain Edwards"; this was a more understated revision of an earlier draft, in which he had noted his satisfaction on hearing of "these Wretches all being taken." On one excursion, he was able to contemplate the neat house and cottage garden of Peter Heywood. "His house was at the foot of a Hill, the top of which gave him a fine look out," Bligh wrote in his log. It was from this hill that Heywood had first sighted the Pandora.

The Providence and the Assistant departed Tahiti on July 19th. In addition to 2,126 transplanted and potted breadfruit, the ship also carried 508 "other" plants, one Tahitian passenger who wished to see England, one stowaway, and thirteen crew members from a shipwrecked British whaler, the Matilda. Perhaps the tension of preparing for departure had increased Bligh's "nervous" affliction, for, as he wrote in his log, his crippling headache was such that he could not "bear the sight of the sun." The Tahitians had promised Bligh that they would build him a house at Point Venus so that he might return and live with them—later visitors confirmed that the islanders kept their word. But William Bligh, reeling under the blue Pacific skies, had no thought of return and took final leave of the island he had once described, of all places in the world, as harboring happiness "in the highest perfection."

Now Bligh directed his ships through the Fijis, taking the opportunity to fix more accurately discoveries he had made from the Bounty launch. Having completed the survey, he continued northwest, and by early September was at the entrance to the Endeavour Strait. Determining to enter from the Gulf of Papua, below New Guinea, and not to the south, as Cook had done, Bligh nosed his ships to the northern end of the reef. Trusting the next perilous steps to no one, blinding headache or not, Bligh clambered up the masthead and conned his vessel himself. Several days later, an encounter with hostile islanders resulted in a number of the ships' party being wounded by arrows. Despite such distractions, Bligh took real interest in his task. His navigation of the strait took nineteen days of careful vigilance, but, as he logged, had he a month to spare he would have completed the survey of this archipelago himself. As it was, he had to be satisfied with having "opened a way" for someone else, for "with a contrary monsoon advancing" there could be no time for delay.

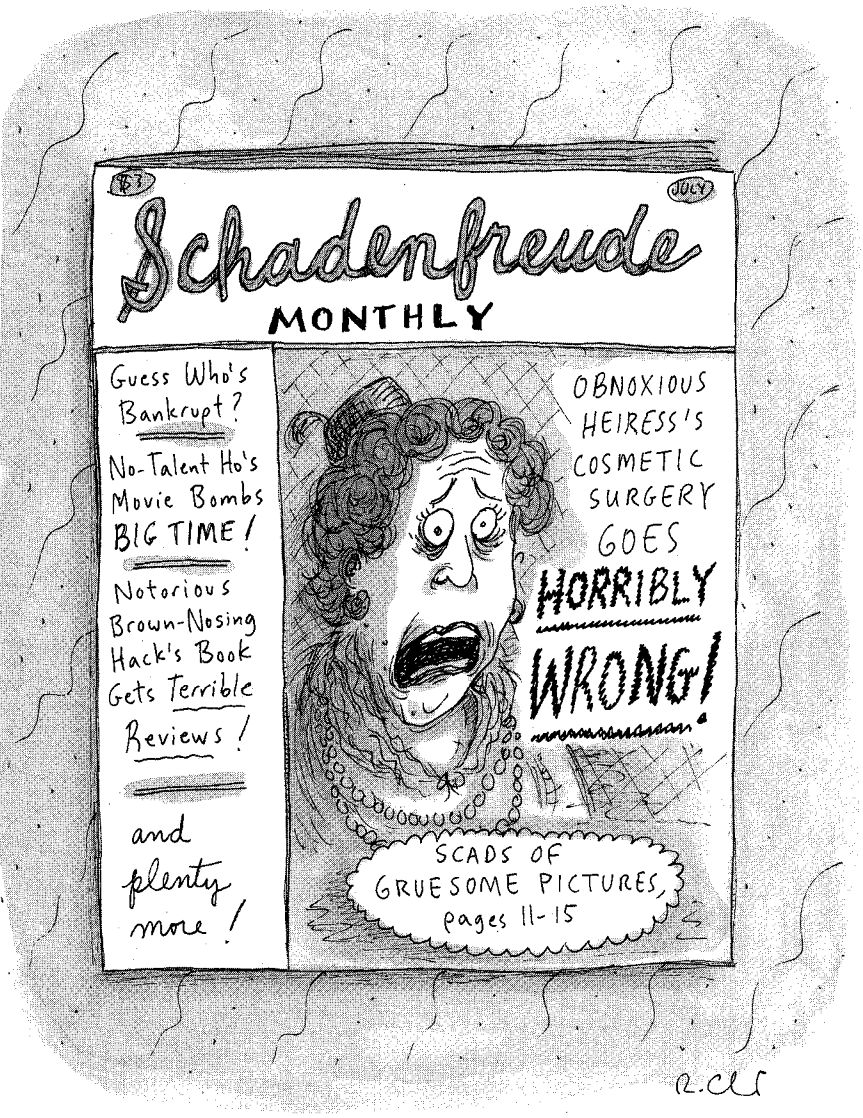
The passage Bligh pioneered through the Great North East Channel remains in wide use today. Until only five years ago, when a channel more suitable for modern ships of deeper draught was surveyed, it served as one of the strait's three major shipping routes.

Christian and the mutineers who departed with the Bounty successfully eluded the long arm of naval law; it was nearly twenty years after the mutiny, when all but one of their party were dead, before it was discovered that the fugitives had colonized a small, remote Pacific island named Pitcairn's. But the final voyage of the Pandora's captured mutineers ended, as Bligh and the Admiralty had intended, with a court-martial in England. On September 18, 1792, judgment was delivered on the accused men by a court of naval officers. The four men Bligh had named as innocent—Coleman, McIntosh, Norman, and Byrn—were duly acquitted. Muspratt, through the services of a clever lawyer, won a reprieve on the basis of a legal technicality. Peter Heywood and James Morrison were found guilty, but pardoned: young Heywood, tattooed like a Tahitian, had been greatly aided by the presence of an uncle and at least four close family friends and associates on the panel of judges presiding over his trial. Heywood's relationship to Lord Howe, one of the highest naval figures in the land, undoubtedly also helped his suit, as did a little straightforward bribery. Heywood returned to naval service, and eventually rose to the rank of post captain. Ellison, Burkett, and Millward, lacking special pleaders, were hanged.

Even in the lifetimes of Bligh and Edwards, the story of the mutiny on the Bounty captured the popular imagination, and both men suffered from garbled, inaccurate accounts of the events. Edwards, like Bligh, was court-martialled for the loss of his ship; he, too, was honorably acquitted. Nevertheless, he received no further seagoing commission, serving only as Regulating Captain, in charge of "recruitment," or impressments, in Scotland for some years. In 1795, he wrote to their lordships of the Admiralty offering his services; and he wrote again the following year, just to remind them. Given that England was at war with France during this time, and in need of ships and men, the fact that Edwards received no commission suggests that the Admiralty had given him the cold shoulder. Retiring on half pay, Edwards died in 1815, at seventy-three. The rumor that he had established a bed-and-breakfast, named, with what would have been a monstrous lack of tact, Pandora's Inn, is, unfortunately, unfounded—although the very existence of such a story can undoubtedly be attributed to a certain blandness in the captain's character. William Bligh, dogged by more virulent if also unfounded rumors, nonetheless served his country with bravery and distinction in important battles of the Napoleonic Wars. He died two years after Edwards, in 1817, at sixty-three.

In later romantic imagination, the Tahitian idyll of the mutineers put ashore by Christian was regarded with sympathetic approval. In this sentimental view, the Pandora's mission of hunting down the fugitives was seen less as an act of justice than as the tragic destruction of the men's settled domestic lives; the report that the Tahitian wife of one of the mutineers had died of grief following her husband's capture particularly inspired the poets. And it was that arch-Romantic Lord Byron, in his poem "The Island, or Christian and His Comrades," who most effectively wrote the men's epitaph:

Young hearts, which languish'd for some sunny isle,
Where summer years and summer women smile;
Men without country, who, too long estranged,
Had found no native home, or found it changed,
And, half uncivilized, preferr'd the cave
Of some soft savage to the uncertain wave. ♦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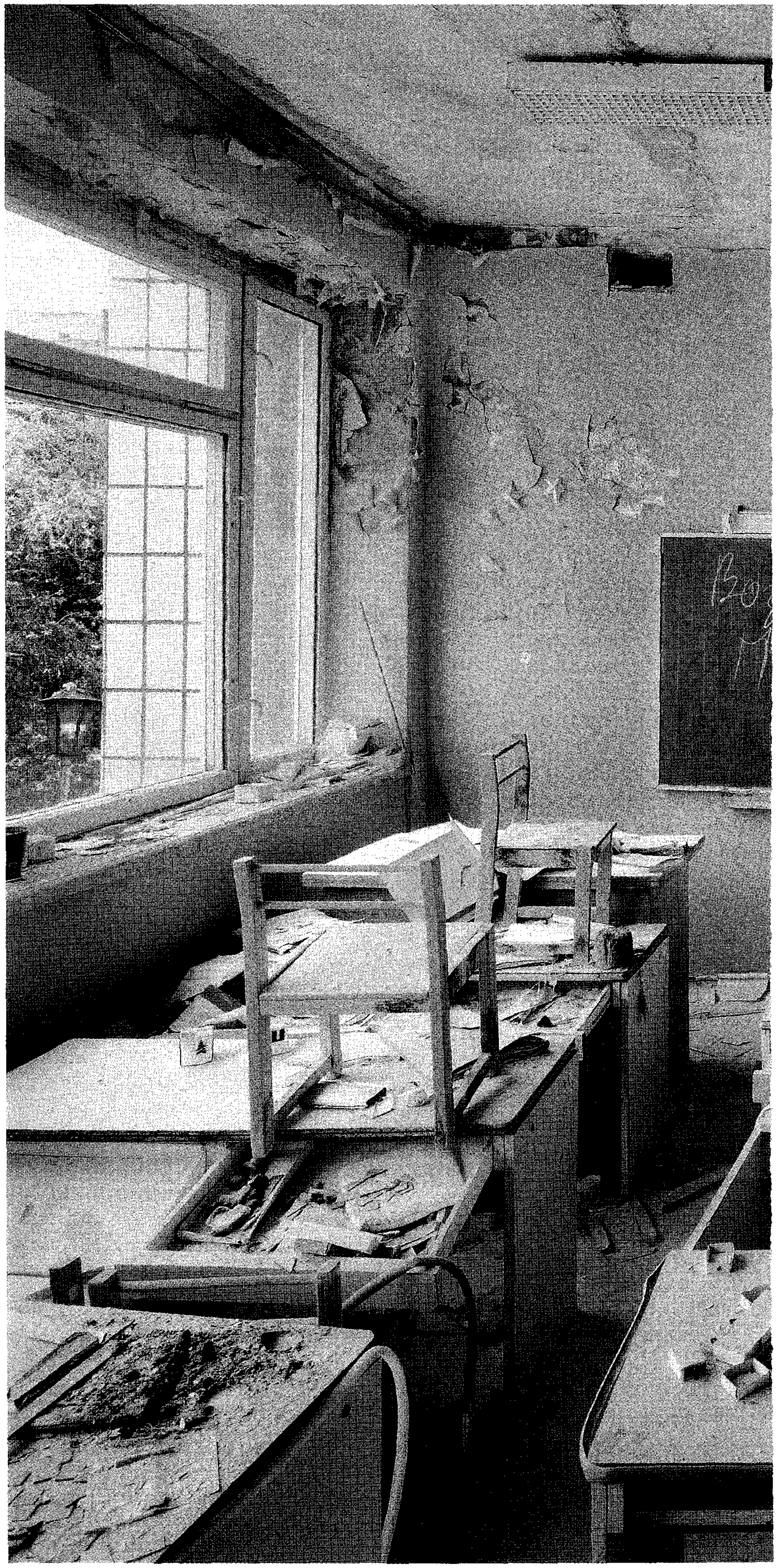
SCADS OF GRUESOME PICTURES, pages 11-15

SHOWCASE
BY ROBERT POLIDORI

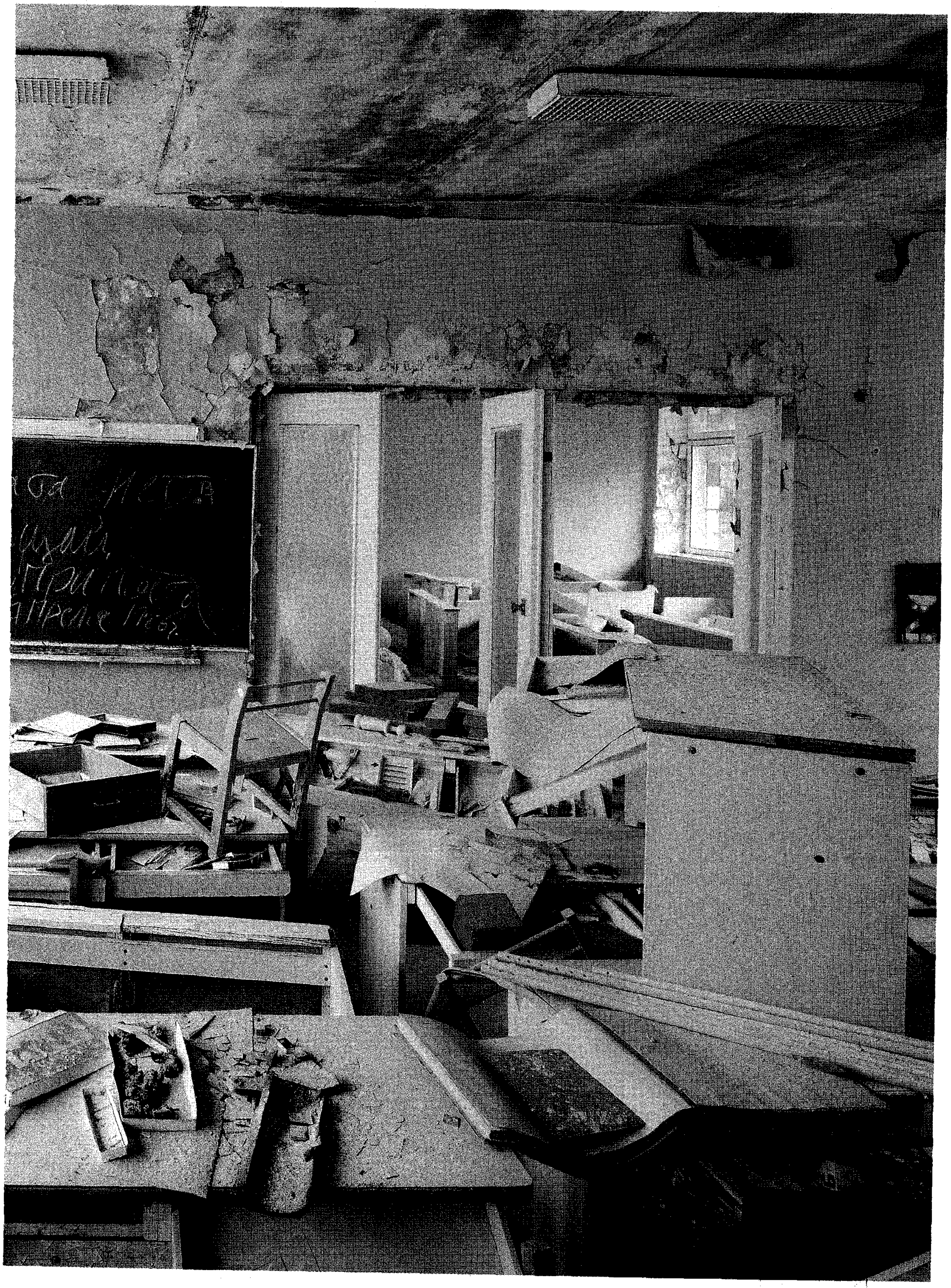
CHERNOBYL



On April 26, 1986, at 1:23 A.M., Reactor No. 4 at Chernobyl trembled and exploded, causing a conflagration that spewed a radioactive cloud ten times as deadly as the radiation at Hiroshima. Many residents of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian towns downwind from the reactor absorbed radiation equivalent to a thousand chest X-rays. And yet the next day, ignorant of the dangers, children played in the fields and on the playgrounds; sixteen couples were married in Pripyat, just two miles from the burning reactor. One of the officials in charge proclaimed, "Panic is worse than radiation."

And then began the headaches, the nosebleeds, the nausea. Thousands of people died of cancers and other diseases in the years after the Chernobyl disaster. Had it not been for hundreds of thousands of soldiers and rescue workers who devoted themselves to the cleanup at Chernobyl and Pripyat, there is no telling how many more people might have died. What certainly died at Chernobyl was the Soviet pretense. With Chernobyl, perestroika began in earnest.

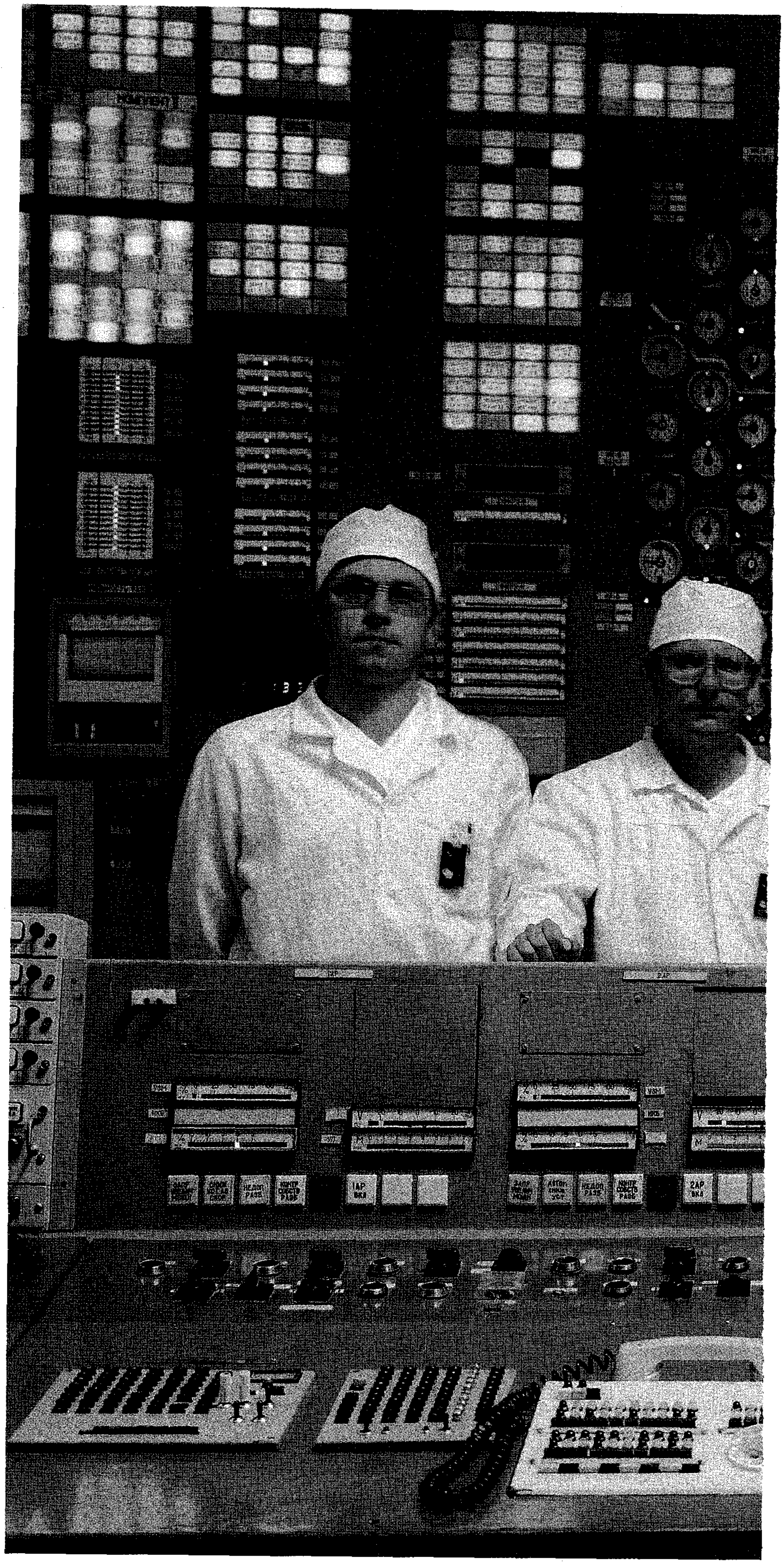
On a trip to Chernobyl a couple of years after the accident, I saw abandoned

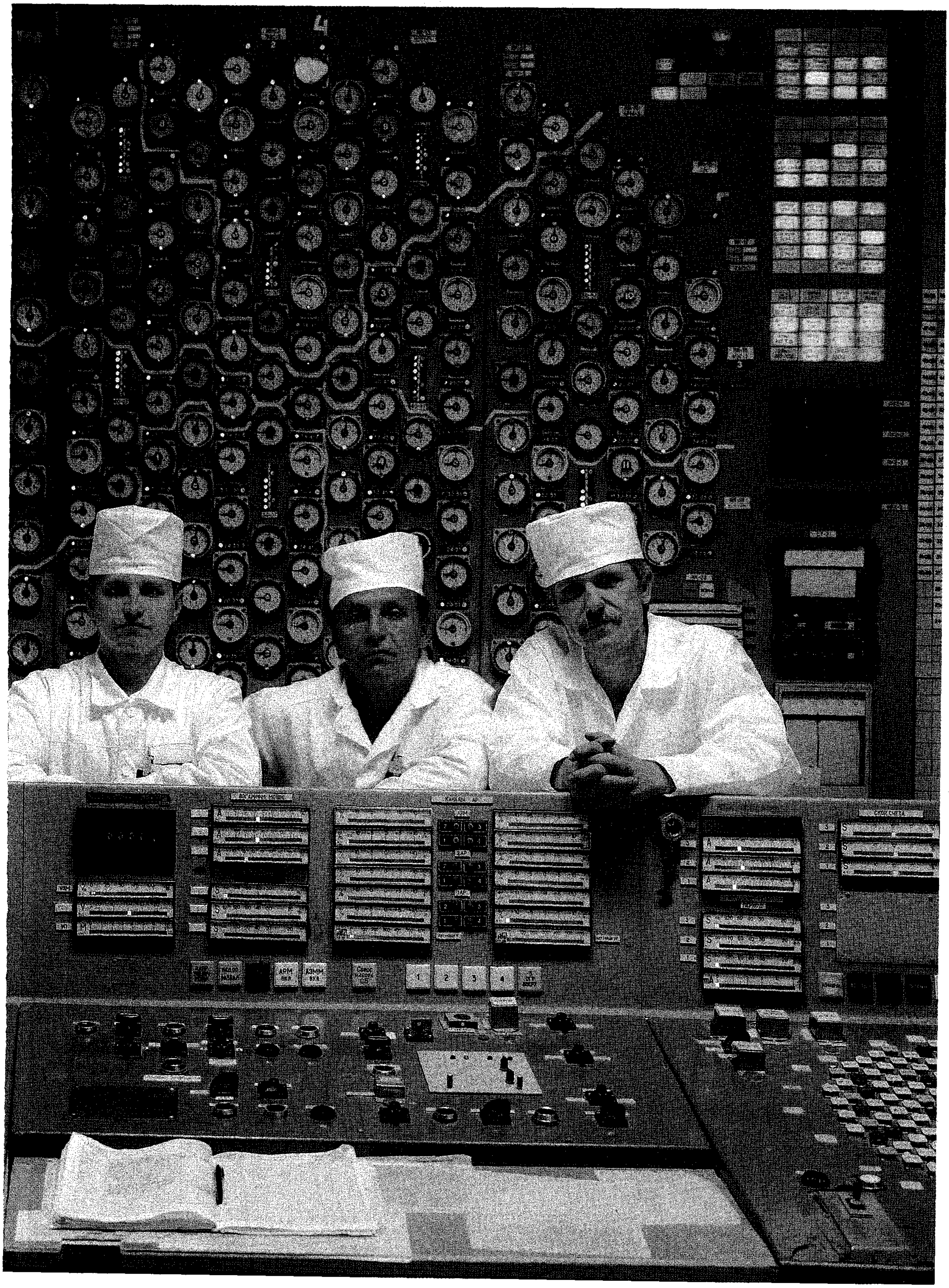


playgrounds, schools, houses, half-buried cars and rail carriages. Reactor No. 4 was a "sarcophagus," encased in concrete, though much of the rest of the complex was running. The only people who lived in the area were the technicians, who came and went in shifts, and the very old, who no longer cared about the calculus of radiation. Recently, the photographer Robert Polidori visited Pripyat and Chernobyl and won unprecedented access there, meeting the engineering team at Reactor No. 3, and visiting a classroom where someone had written on the blackboard, "No return. Farewell. Pripyat, 28 April, 1986."

We have seen all the toppled statues of Lenin, Marx, and Dzerzhinsky, but, as Polidori's photographs make painfully clear, nothing quite compares to Chernobyl as a gallery of ruin. Yuri Shcherbak, a former Ukrainian ambassador to the United States, who is a physician and anti-nuclear crusader, once said, "If it weren't for the danger, they should leave the Chernobyl plant standing. It could be the great monument to the Soviet empire."

—*David Remnick*

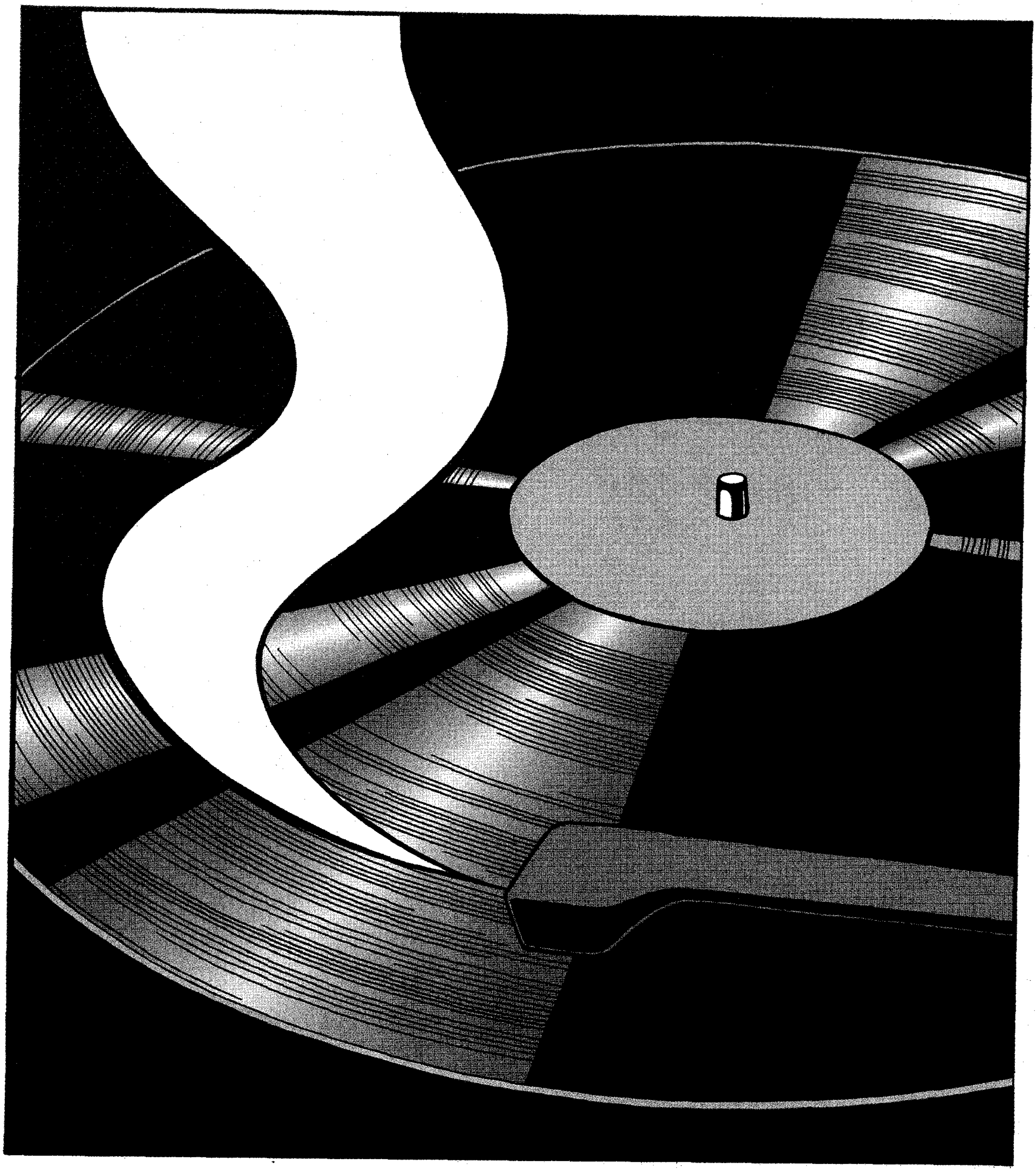




FICTION

A RICH MAN

BY EDWARD P. JONES



Horace and Loneese Perkins—one child, one grandchild—lived most unhappily together for more than twelve years in Apartment 230 at Sunset House, a building for senior citizens at 1202 Thirteenth Street NW. They moved there in 1977, the year they celebrated forty years of marriage, the year they made love for the last time—Loneese kept a diary of sorts, and that fact was noted on one day of a week when she noted nothing else. "He touched me," she wrote, which had always been her diary euphemism for sex. That was also the year they retired, she as a pool secretary at the Commerce Department, where she had known one lover, and he as a civilian employee at the Pentagon, as the head of veteran records. He had been an Army sergeant for ten years before becoming head of records; the Secretary of Defense gave him a plaque as big as his chest on the day he retired, and he and the Secretary of Defense and Loneese had their picture taken, a picture that hung for all those twelve years in the living room of Apartment 230, on the wall just to the right of the heating-and-air-conditioning unit.

A month before they moved in, they drove in their burgundy-and-gold Cadillac from their small house on Chesapeake Street in Southeast to a Union Station restaurant and promised each other that Sunset House would be a new beginning for them. Over blackened catfish and a peach cobbler that they both agreed could have been better, they vowed to devote themselves to each other and become even better grandparents. Horace had long known about the Commerce Department lover. Loneese had told him about the man two months after she had ended the relationship, in 1969. "He worked in the mail room," she told her husband over a spaghetti supper she had cooked in the Chesapeake Street home. "He touched me in the motel room," she wrote in her diary, "and after it was over he begged me to go away to Florida with him. All I could think about was that Florida was for old people."

At that spaghetti supper, Horace did not mention the dozens of lovers he had had in his time as her husband. She knew there had been many, knew it because they were written on his face in the early years of their marriage, and because he had never bothered to hide what he was doing in the later years. "I be back in a while. I got some business to do," he would say. He did not even mention the lover he had slept with just the day before the spaghetti supper, the one he bid goodbye to with a "Be good and be sweet" after telling her he planned to become a new man and respect his marriage vows. The woman, a thin school-bus driver with clanking bracelets up to her elbows on both arms, snorted a laugh, which made Horace want to slap her, because he was used to people taking him seriously. "Forget you, then," Horace said on the way out the door. "I was just tryin to let you down easy."

Over another spaghetti supper two weeks before moving, they reiterated what had been said at the blackened-catfish supper and did the dishes together and went to bed as man and wife, and over the next days sold almost all the Chesapeake Street furniture. What they kept belonged primarily to Horace, starting with a collection of six hundred and thirty-nine record albums, many of them his "sweet babies," the 78s. If a band worth anything had recorded between 1915 and 1950, he bragged, he had the record; after 1950, he said, the bands got sloppy and he had to back away. Horace also kept the Cadillac he had painted to honor a football team, paid to park the car in the underground garage. Sunset had once been intended as a luxury place, but the builders, two friends of the city commissioners, ran out of money in the middle and the commissioners had the city-government people buy it off them. The city-government people completed Sunset, with its tiny rooms, and then, after one commissioner gave a speech in Southwest about looking out for old people, some city-government people in Northeast came up with the idea that old people might like to live in Sunset, in Northwest.

Three weeks after Horace and Loneese moved in, Horace went down to the lobby one Saturday afternoon to get their mail and happened to see Clara Knightley getting her mail. She lived in Apartment 512. "You got this fixed up real nice," Horace said of Apartment 512 a little less than an hour after meeting her. "But I could see just in the way that you carry yourself that you got good taste. I could tell that about you right off." "You swellin my head with all that talk, Mr. Perkins," Clara said, offering him coffee, which he rejected, because such moments always called for something stronger. "Whas a woman's head for if a man can't swell it up from time to time. Huh? Answer me that, Clara. You just answer me that." Clara was fifty-five, a bit younger than most of the residents of Sunset House, though she was much older than all Horace's other lovers. She did not fit the city people's definition of a senior citizen, but she had a host of ailments, from high blood pressure to diabetes, and so the city people had let her in.

Despite the promises, the marriage, what little there had been of it, came to an end. "I will make myself happy," Loneese told the diary a month after he last touched her. Loneese and Horace had fixed up their apartment nicely, and neither of them wanted to give the place up to the other. She wanted to make a final stand with the man who had given her so much heartache, the man who had told her, six months after her confession, what a whore she had been to sleep with the Commerce Department mail-room man. Horace, at sixty, had never thought much of women over fifty, but Clara—and, after her, Willa, of Apartment 1001, and Miriam, of Apartment 109—had awakened something in him, and he began to think that women over fifty weren't such a bad deal after all. Sunset House had dozens of such women, many of them attractive widows, many of them eager for a kind word from a retired Army sergeant who had so many medals and ribbons that his uniform could not carry them. As far as he could see, he was cock of the walk: many of the men in Sunset suffered from diseases that Horace had so far escaped, or they were not as good-looking or as thin, or they were encumbered by wives they loved. In Sunset House he was a rich man. So why move and give that whore the satisfaction?

They lived separate lives in a space that was only a fourth as large as the Chesapeake Street house. The building came to know them as the man and wife in 230 who couldn't stand each other. People talked about the Perkinses more

JAIME HERNANDEZ

than they did about anyone else, which was particularly upsetting to Loneese, who had been raised to believe family business should stay in the family. "Oh, Lord, what them two been up to now?" "Fight like cats and dogs, they do." "Who he seein now?" They each bought their own food from the Richfood on Eleventh Street or from the little store on Thirteenth Street, and they could be vile to each other if what one bought was disturbed or eaten by the other. Loneese stopped speaking to Horace for nine months in 1984 and 1985, when she saw that her pumpkin pie was a bit smaller than when she last cut a slice from it. "I ain't touch your damn pie, you crazy woman," he said when she accused him. "How long you been married to me? You know I've never been partial to pumpkin pie." "That's fine for you to say, Horace, but why is some missing? You might not be partial to it, but I know you. I know you'll eat anything in a pinch. That's just your dirty nature." "My nature ain't no more dirty than yours."

After that, she bought a small icebox for the bedroom where she slept, though she continued to keep the larger items in the kitchen refrigerator. He bought a separate telephone, because he complained that she wasn't giving him his messages from his "associates." "I have never been a secretary for whores," she said, watching him set up an answering machine next to the hide-a-bed couch where he slept. "Oh, don't get me started bout whores. I'd say you wrote the damn book." "It was dictated by you."

Their one child, Alonzo, lived with his wife and son in Baltimore. He had not been close to his parents for a long time, and he could not put the why of it into words for his wife. Their boy, Alonzo, Jr., who was twelve when his grandparents moved into Sunset, loved to visit them. Horace would unplug and put away his telephone when the boy visited. And Loneese and Horace would sleep together in the bedroom. She'd put a pillow between them in the double bed to remind herself not to roll toward him.

Their grandson visited less and less as he moved into his teen-age years, and then, after he went away to college, in Ohio, he just called them every few weeks, on the phone they had had installed in the name of Horace and Loneese Perkins.

In 1987, Loneese's heart began the countdown to its last beat and she started spending more time at George Washington University Hospital than she did in the apartment. Horace never visited her. She died two years later. She woke up that last night in the hospital and went out into the hall and then to the nurses' station but could not find a nurse anywhere to tell her where she was or why she was there. "Why do the patients have to run this place alone?" she said to the walls. She returned to her room and it came to her why she was there. It was nearing three in the morning, but she called her own telephone first, then she dialled Horace's. He answered, but she never said a word. "Who's this playin on my phone?" Horace kept asking. "Who's this? I don't allow no playin on my phone." She hung up and lay down and said her prayers. After moving into Sunset, she had taken one more lover, a man at Vermont Avenue Baptist Church, where she went from time to time. He was retired, too. She wrote in her diary that he was not a big eater and that "down there, his vitals were missing."

Loneese Perkins was buried in a plot at Harmony Cemetery that she and Horace had bought when they were younger. There was a spot for Horace and there was one for their son, but Alonzo had long since made plans to be buried in a cemetery just outside Baltimore.

Horace kept the apartment more or less the way it was on the last day she was there. His son and daughter-in-law and grandson took some of her clothes to the Goodwill and the rest they gave to other women in the building. There were souvenirs from countries that Loneese and Horace had visited as man and wife—a Ghanaian carving of men surrounding a leopard they had killed, a brass menorah from Israel, a snow globe of Mt. Fuji with some of the snow stuck forever to the top of the globe. They were things that did not mean very much to Alonzo, but he knew his child, and he knew that one day Alonzo, Jr., would cherish them.

Horace tried sleeping in the bed, but he had been not unhappy in his twelve years on the hide-a-bed. He got rid of the bed and moved the couch into the bedroom and kept it open all the time.

He realized two things after Loneese's death: His own "vitals" had rejuvenated. He had never had the problems other men had, though he had failed a few times along the way, but that was to be expected. Now, as he moved closer to his seventy-third birthday, he felt himself becoming ever stronger, ever more potent. God is a strange one, he thought, sipping Chivas Regal one night before he went out: he takes a man's wife and gives him a new penis in her place.

The other thing he realized was that he was more and more attracted to younger women. When Loneese died, he had been keeping company with a woman of sixty-one, Sandy Carlin, in Apartment 907. One day in February, nine months after Loneese's death, one of Sandy's daughters, Jill, came to visit, along with one of Jill's friends, Elaine Cunningham. They were both twenty-five years old. From the moment they walked through Sandy's door, Horace began to compliment them—on their hair, the color of their fingernail polish, the sharp crease in Jill's pants ("You iron that yourself?"), even "that sophisticated way" Elaine crossed her legs. The young women giggled, which made him happy, pleased with himself, and Sandy sat in her place on the couch. As the ice in the Pepsi-Cola in her left hand melted, she realized all over again that God had never promised her a man until her dying day.

When the girls left, about three in the afternoon, Horace offered to accompany them downstairs, "to keep all them bad men away." In the lobby, as the security guard at her desk strained to hear, he made it known that he wouldn't mind if they came by to see him sometime. The women looked at each other and giggled some more. They had been planning to go to a club in Southwest that evening, but they were amused by the old man, by the way he had his rap together and put them on some sort of big pedestal and shit, as Jill would tell another friend weeks later. And when he saw how receptive they were he said why not come on up tonight, shucks, ain't no time like the present. Jill said he musta got that from a song, but he said no, he'd been sayin that since before they were born, and Elaine said thas the truth, and the women giggled again. He said I ain't gonna lie bout bein a seasoned man, and then he joined in the giggling. Jill looked at Elaine and said want to? And Elaine said what about your mom? And Jill shrugged her shoulders and Elaine said O.K. She had just broken up with a man she had met at another club and needed something to make the pain go away until there was another man, maybe from a better club.

At about eleven-thirty, Jill wandered off into the night, her head liquored up, and Elaine stayed and got weepy—about the man from the not-so-good club, about the two abortions, about running away from home at seventeen after a fight with her father. "I just left him nappin on the couch," she said, stretched out on Horace's new living-room couch, her shoes off and one of Loneese's throws over her feet. Horace was in the chair across from her. "For all I know, he's still on that couch." Even before she got to her father, even before the abortions, he knew that he would sleep with her that night. He did not even need to fill her glass a third time. "He was a fat man," she said of her father. "And there ain't a whole lot more I remember."

"Listen," he said as she talked about her father, "everything's gonna work out right for you." He knew that, at such times in a seduction, the more positive a man was the better things went. It would not have done to tell her to forget her daddy, that she had done the right thing by running out on that fat so-and-so; it was best to focus on tomorrow and tell her that the world would be brighter in the morning. He came over to the couch, and before he sat down on the edge of the coffee table he hiked up his pants just a bit with his fingertips, and seeing him do that reminded her vaguely of something wonderful. The boys in the club sure didn't do it that way. He took her hand and kissed her palm. "Everything's gonna work out to the good," he said.

"The truth serum made you say some very hurtful things."

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Elaine Cunningham woke in the morning with Horace sleeping quietly beside her. She did not rebuke herself and did not look over at him with horror at what she had done. She sighed and laid her head back on the pillow and thought how much she still loved the man from the club, but there was nothing more she could do: not even the five-hundred-dollar leather jacket she had purchased for the man had brought him around. Two years after running away, she had gone back to where she had lived with her parents, but they had moved and no one in the building knew where they had gone. But everyone remembered her. "You sure done growed up, Elaine," one old woman said. "I wouldna knowed if you hadn't told me who you was." "Fuck em," Elaine said to the friends who had given her a ride there. "Fuck em all to hell." Then, in the car, heading out to Capitol Heights, where she was staying, "Well, maybe not fuck my mother. She was good." "Just fuck your daddy then?" the girl in the back seat said. Elaine thought about it as they went down Rhode Island Avenue, and just before they turned onto New Jersey Avenue she said, "Yes, just fuck my daddy. The fat fuck."

She got out of Horace's bed and tried to wet the desert in her mouth as she looked in his closet for a bathrobe. She rejected the blue and the paisley ones for a dark-green one that reminded her of something wonderful, just as Horace's hiking up his pants had. She smelled the sleeves once she had it on, but there was only the strong scent of detergent.

In the half room that passed for a kitchen, she stood and drank most of the orange juice in the gallon carton. "Now, that was stupid, girl," she said. "You know you shoulda drunk water. Better for the thirst." She returned the carton to the refrigerator and marvelled at all the food. "Damn!" she said. With the refrigerator door still open, she stepped out into the living room and took note of all that Horace had, thinking, A girl could live large here if she did things right. She had been crashing at a friend's place in Northeast, and the friend's mother had begun to hint that it was time for her to move on. Even when she had a job, she rarely had a place of her own. "Hmm," she said, looking through the refrigerator for what she wanted to eat. "Boody for home and food. Food, home. Boody. You shoulda stayed in school, girl. They give courses on this. Food and Home the first semester. Boody Givin the second semester."

But, as she ate her eggs and bacon and Hungry Man biscuits, she knew that she did not want to sleep with Horace too many more times, even if he did have his little castle. He was too tall, and she had never been attracted to tall men, old or otherwise. "Damn! Why couldn't he be what I wanted and have a nice place, too?" Then, as she sopped up the last of the yolk with the last half of the last biscuit, she thought of her best friend, Catrina, the woman she was crashing with. Catrina Stockton was twenty-eight, and though she had once been a heroin addict, she was one year clean and had a face and a body that testified not to a woman who had lived a bad life on the streets but to a nice-looking Virginia woman who had married at seventeen, had had three children by a truck-driving husband, and had met a man in a Fredericksburg McDonald's who had said that women like her could be queens in D.C.

Yes, Elaine thought as she leaned over the couch and stared at the photograph of Horace and Loneese and the Secretary of Defense, Catrina was always saying how much she wanted love, how it didn't matter what a man looked like, as long as he was good to her and loved her morning, noon, and night. The Secretary of Defense was in the middle of the couple. She did not know who he was, just that she had seen him somewhere, maybe on the television. Horace was holding the plaque just to the left, away from the Secretary. Elaine reached over and removed a spot of dust from the picture with her fingertip, and before she could flick it away a woman said her name and she looked around, chilled.

She went into the bedroom to make sure that the voice had not been death telling her to check on Horace. She found him sitting up in the bed, yawning and stretching. "You sleep good, honey bunch?" he said. "I sure did, sweetie pie," she said and bounded across the room to hug him. A breakfast like the one she'd had would cost at least four dollars anywhere in D.C. or Maryland. "Oh, but Papa likes that," Horace said. And even the cheapest motels out on New York Avenue, the ones catering to the junkies and prostitutes, charged at least twenty-five dollars a night. What's a hug compared with that? And, besides, she liked him more than she had thought, and the issue of Catrina and her moving in had to be done delicately. "Well, just let me give you a little bit mo, then."

Young stuff is young stuff, Horace thought the first time Elaine brought Catrina by and Catrina gave him a peck on the cheek and said, "I feel like I know you from all that Elaine told me." That was in early March.

In early April, Elaine met another man at a new club on F Street Northwest and fell in love, and so did Horace with Catrina, though Catrina, after several years on the street, knew what she was feeling might be in the neighborhood of love but it was nowhere near the right house. She and Elaine told Horace the saddest of stories about the man Elaine had met in the club, and before the end of April he was sleeping on Horace's living-room floor. It helped that the man, Darnell Mudd, knew the way to anyone's heart, man or woman, and that he claimed to have a father who had been a hero in the Korean War. He even knew the name of the Secretary of Defense in the photograph and how long he had served in the Cabinet.

By the middle of May, there were as many as five other people, friends of the three young people, hanging out at any one time in Horace's place. He was giddy with Catrina, with the blunts, with the other women who snuck out with him to a room at the motel across Thirteenth Street. By early June, more than a hundred of his old records had been stolen and pawned. "Leave his stuff alone," Elaine said to Darnell and his friends as

BEGINNING AGAIN

"If I could stop talking, completely
cease talking for a year, I might begin
to get well," he muttered.
Off alone again performing
brain surgery on himself
in a small badly lit
room with no mirror. A room
whose floor ceiling and walls
are all mirrors, what a mess
oh my God—

And still
it stands,
the question
not how begin
again, but rather

Why?

So we sit there
together
the mountain
and me, Li Po
said, until only the mountain
remains.

—*Franz Wright*

they were going out the door with ten records apiece. "Don't take his stuff. He loves that stuff." It was eleven in the morning and everyone else in the apartment, including Horace, was asleep. "Sh-h-h," Darnell said. "He got so many he won't notice." And that was true. Horace hadn't played records in many months. He had two swords that were originally on the wall opposite the heating-and-air-conditioning unit. Both had belonged to German officers killed in the Second World War. Horace, high on the blunts, liked to see the young men sword fight with them. But the next day, sober, he would hide them in the bottom of the closet, only to pull them out again when the partying started, at about four in the afternoon.

His neighbors, especially the neighbors who considered that Loneese had been the long-suffering one in the marriage, complained to the management about the noise, but the city-government people read in his rental record that he had lost his wife not long ago and told the neighbors that he was probably doing some kind of grieving. The city-government people never went above the first floor in Sunset. "He's a veteran who just lost his wife," they would say to those who came to the glass office on the first floor. "Why don't you cut him some slack?" But Horace tried to get a grip on things after a maintenance man told him to be careful. That was about the time one of the swords was broken and he could not for the life of him remember how it had happened. He just found it one afternoon in two pieces in the refrigerator's vegetable bin.

Things toned down a little, but the young women continued to come by and Horace went on being happy with them and with Catrina, who called him Papa and pretended to be upset when she saw him kissing another girl. "Papa, what am I gonna do with you and all your hussies?" "Papa, promise you'll only love me." "Papa, I need a new outfit. Help me out, willya please?"

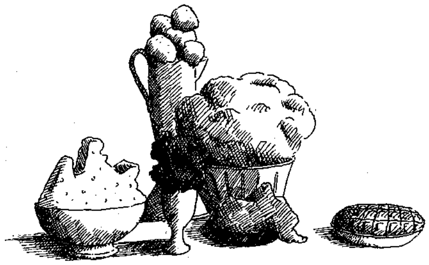
Elaine had become pregnant not long after meeting Darnell, who told her to have the baby, that he had always wanted a son to carry on his name. "We can call him Junior," he said. "Or Little Darnell," she said. As she began showing, Horace and Catrina became increasingly concerned about her. Horace remembered how solicitous he had been when Loneese had been pregnant. He had not taken the first lover yet, had not even thought about anyone else as she grew and grew. He told Elaine no drugs or alcohol until the baby was born, and he tried to get her to go to bed at a decent hour, but that was often difficult with a small crowd in the living room.

Horace's grandson called in December, wanting to come by to see him, but Horace told him it would be best to meet someplace downtown, because his place was a mess. He didn't do much cleaning since Loneese died. "I don't care about that," Alonzo, Jr., said. "Well, I do," Horace said. "You know how I can be bout these things."

In late December, Elaine gave birth to a boy, several weeks early. They gave him the middle name Horace. "See," Darnell said one day, holding the baby on the couch. "Thas your grandpa. You don't mind me callin you his granddad, Mr. Perkins? You don't mind, do you?" The city-government people in the rental office, led by someone new, someone who took the rules seriously, took note that the old man in Apartment 230 had a baby and his mama and daddy in the place and not a single one of them was even related to him, though if one had been it still would have been against the rules as laid down in the rule book of apartment living.

By late February, an undercover policeman had bought two packets of crack from someone in the apartment. It was a woman, he told his superiors at first, and that's what he wrote in his report, but in a subsequent report he wrote that he had bought the rocks from a man. "Start over," said one of his superiors, who supped monthly with the new mayor, who lived for numbers, and in March the undercover man went back to buy more.

It was late on a warm Saturday night in April when Elaine woke to the crackle of walkie-talkies outside the door. She had not seen Darnell in more than a month, and something told her that she should get out of there because there might not be any more good times. She thought of Horace and Catrina asleep in the bedroom. Two men and two women she did not know very well were asleep in various places around the living room, but she had dated the brother of one of the women some three years ago. One of the men claimed to be Darnell's cousin, and, to prove it to her, when he knocked at the door that night he showed her a Polaroid of him and Darnell at a club, their arms around each other and their eyes red, because the camera had been cheap and the picture cost only two dollars.



She got up from the couch and looked into the crib. In the darkness she could make out that her son was awake, his little legs kicking and no sound from him but a happy gurgle. The sound of the walkie-talkie outside the door came and went. She could see it all on the television news—"Drug Dealing Mama in Jail. Baby Put in Foster Care." She stepped over the man who said he was Darnell's cousin and pushed the door to the bedroom all the way open. Catrina was getting out of bed. Horace was snoring. He had never snored before in his life, but the drugs and alcohol together had done bad things to his airway.

"You hear anything?" Elaine whispered as Catrina tiptoed to her.

"I sure did," Catrina said. Sleeping on the streets required keeping one eye and both ears open. "I don't wanna go back to jail."

"Shit. Me, neither," Elaine said. "What about the window?"

"Go out and down two floors? With a baby? Damn!"

"We can do it," Elaine said, looking over Catrina's shoulder to the dark lump that was Horace mumbling in his sleep. "What about him?"

Catrina turned her head. "He old. They ain't gonna do anything to him. I'm just worried bout makin it with that baby."

"Well, I sure as hell ain't gonna go without my child."

"I ain't said we was," Catrina hissed. "Down two floors just ain't gonna be easy, is all."

"We can do it," Elaine said.

"We can do it," Catrina said. She tiptoed to the chair at the foot of the bed and went through Horace's pants pock-

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ets. "Maybe fifty dollars here," she whispered after returning. "I already got about three hundred."

"You been stealin from him?" Elaine said. The lump in the bed turned over and moaned, then settled back to snoring.

"God helps them that helps themselves, Elaine. Les go." Catrina had her clothes in her hands and went on by Elaine, who watched as the lump in the bed turned again, snoring all the while. Bye, Horace. Bye. I be seein you.

The policeman in the unmarked car parked across Thirteenth Street watched as Elaine stood on the edge of the balcony and jumped. She passed for a second in front of the feeble light over the entrance and landed on the sloping entrance of the underground parking garage. The policeman was five years from retirement and he did not move, because he could see quite well from where he sat. His partner, only three years on the job, was asleep in the passenger seat. The veteran thought the woman jumping might have hurt herself, because he did not see her rise from the ground for several minutes. I wouldn't do it, the man thought, not for all a rich man's money. The woman did rise, but before she did he saw another woman lean over the balcony dangling a bundle. Drugs? he thought. Nah. Clothes? Yeah, clothes more like it. The bundle was on a long rope or string—it was too far for the man to make out. The woman on the balcony leaned over very far and the woman on the ground reached up as far as she could, but still the bundle was a good two feet from her hands.

Just let them clothes drop, the policeman thought. Then Catrina released the bundle and Elaine caught it. Good catch. I wonder what she looks like in the light. Catrina jumped, and the policeman watched her pass momentarily in front of the light, and then he looked over at his partner. He himself didn't mind filling out the forms so much, but his partner did, so he let him sleep on. I'll be on a lake fishin my behind off and you'll still be doin this. When he looked back, the first woman was coming up the slope of the entrance with the bundle in her arms and the second one was limping after her. I wonder what that one looks like in a good light. Once on the sidewalk, both women looked left, then right, and headed down Thirteenth Street. The policeman yawned and watched through his sideview mirror as the women crossed M Street. He yawned again. Even at three o'clock in the morning people still jaywalked.

The man who was a cousin of Darnell's was on his way back from the bathroom when the police broke through the door. He frightened easily, and though he had just emptied his bladder, he peed again as the door came open and the light of the hallway and the loud men came spilling in on him and his sleeping companions.

Horace began asking about Catrina and Elaine and the baby as soon as they put him in a cell. It took him that long to clear his head and understand what was happening to him. He pressed his face against the bars, trying to get his bearings and ignoring everything behind him in the cell. He stuck his mouth as far out of the bars as he could and shouted for someone to tell him whether they knew if the young women and the baby were all right. "They just women, y'all," he kept saying for some five minutes. "They wouldn't hurt a flea. Officers, please. Please, Officers. What's done happened to them? And that baby . . . That baby is so innocent." It was a little after six in the morning, and men up and down the line started hollering for him to shut up or they would stick the biggest dick he ever saw in his mouth. Stunned, he did quiet down, because, while he was used to street language coming from the young men who came and went in his apartment, no bad words had ever been directed at him. They talked trash with the filthiest language he had ever heard but they always invited him to join in and "talk about how it really is," talk about his knowing the Secretary of Defense and the Mayor. Usually, after the second blunt, he was floating along with them. Now someone had threatened to do to him what he and the young men said they would do to any woman that crossed them.

Then he turned from the bars and considered the three men he was sharing the two-man cell with. The city-jail people liked to make as little work for themselves as possible, and filling cells beyond their capacity meant having to deal with fewer locks. One man was cocooned in blankets on the floor beside the tiered metal beds. The man sleeping on the top bunk had a leg over the side, and because he was a tall man the leg came down to within six inches of the face of the man lying on the bottom bunk. That man was awake and on his back and picking his nose and staring at Horace. His other hand was under his blanket, in the crotch of his pants. What the man got out of his nose he would flick up at the bottom of the bunk above him. Watching him, Horace remembered that a very long time ago, even before the Chesapeake Street house, Loneese would iron his handkerchiefs and fold them into four perfect squares.

"Daddy," the man said, "you got my smokes?"

"What?" Horace said. He recalled doing it to Catrina about two or three in the morning and then rolling over and going to sleep. He also remembered slapping flies away in his dreams, flies that were as big as the hands of policemen.

The man seemed to have an infinite supply of boogers, and the more he picked the more Horace's stomach churned. He used to think it was such a shame to unfold the handkerchiefs, so wondrous were the squares. The man sighed at Horace's question and put something from his nose on the big toe of the sleeping man above him. "I said do you got my smokes?"

"I don't have my cigarettes with me," Horace said. He tried the best white man's English he knew, having been told by a friend who was serving with him in the Army in Germany that it impressed not only white people but black people who weren't going anywhere in life. "I left my cigarettes at home." His legs were aching and he wanted to sit on the floor, but the only available space was in the general area of where he was standing and something adhered to his shoes every time he lifted his feet. "I wish I did have my cigarettes to give you."

"I didn't ask you bout *your* cigarettes. I don't wanna smoke them. I ask you bout *my* cigarettes. I wanna know if you brought *my* cigarettes."

Someone four cells down screamed and called out in his sleep: "Irene, why did you do this to me? Irene, ain't love worth a damn anymore?" Someone else told him to shut up or he would get a king-sized dick in his mouth.

"I told you I do not have any cigarettes," Horace said.

"You know, you ain't worth shit," the man said. "You take the cake and mess it all up. You really do. Now, you know you was comin to jail, so why didn't you bring my goddam smokes? What kinda fuckin consideration is that?"

Horace decided to say nothing. He raised first one leg and then the other and shook them, hoping that would relieve the aches. Slowly, he turned around to face the bars. No one had told him what was going to happen to him. He knew a lawyer, but he did not know if he was still practicing. He had friends, but he did not want any of them to see him in jail. He hoped the man would go to sleep.

"Don't turn your fuckin back on me after all we meant to each other," the man said. "We have this long relationship and you do this to me. Whas wrong with you, Daddy?"

"Look," Horace said, turning back to the man. "I done told you I ain't got no smokes. I ain't got your smokes. I ain't got my smokes. I ain't got nobody's smokes. Why can't you understand that?" He was aware that he was veering away from the white man's English, but he knew that his friend from Germany was probably home asleep safely in his bed. "I can't give you what I don't have." Men were murdered in the D.C. jail, or so the Washington *Post* told him. "Can't you understand what I'm sayin?" His back stayed as close to the bars as he could manage. Who was this Irene, he thought, and what had she done to steal into a man's dreams that way?

"So, Daddy, it's gonna be like that, huh?" the man said, raising his head and pushing the foot of the upper-bunk man out of the way so he could see Horace better. He took his hand out of his crotch and pointed at Horace. "You gon pull a Peter-and-Jesus thing on me and deny you ever knew me, huh? Thas your plan, Daddy?" He lowered his head back to the black-and-white striped pillow. "I've seen some low-down dirty shit in my day, but you the lowest. After our long relationship and everything."

"I never met you in my life," Horace said, grabbing the bars behind him with both hands, hoping, again, for relief.

"I won't forget this, and you know how long my memory is. First, you don't bring me my smokes, like you know you should. Then you deny all that we had. Don't go to sleep in here, Daddy, thas all I gotta say."

He thought of Reilly Johnson, a man he had worked with in the Pentagon. Reilly considered himself something of a photographer. He had taken the pic-

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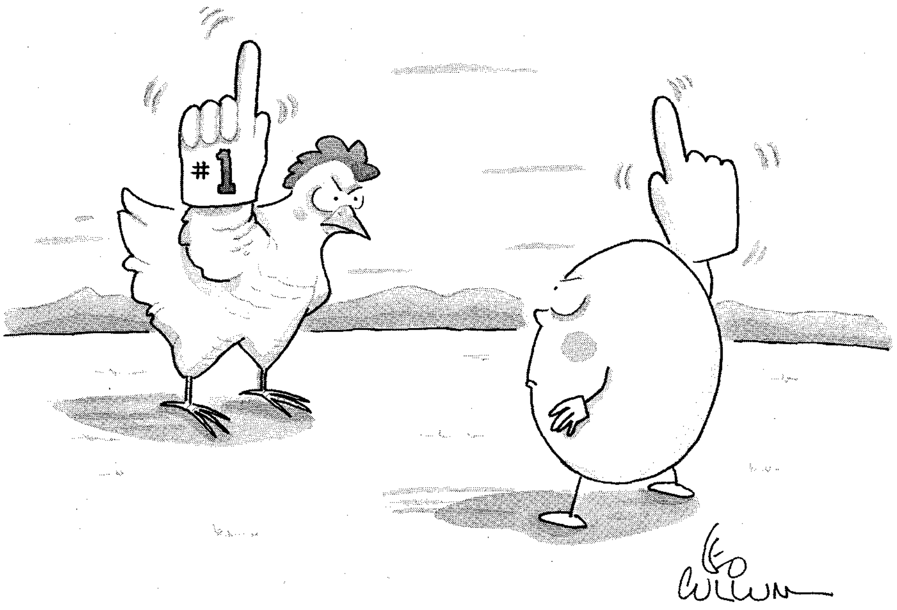


ture of Horace with the Secretary of Defense. What would the bail be? Would Reilly be at home to receive his call on a Sunday morning? Would they give him bail? The policemen who pulled him from his bed had tsk-tsked in his face. “Sellin drugs and corruptin young people like that?” “I didn’t know nothin about that, Officer. Please.” “Tsk tsk. An old man like you.”

“The world ain’t big enough for you to hide from my righteous wrath, Daddy. And you know how righteous I can be when I get started. The world ain’t big enough, so you know this jail ain’t big enough.”

Horace turned back to the bars. Was something in the back as painful as something in the stomach? He touched his face. Rarely, even in the lost months with Catrina, had he failed to shave each morning. A man’s capable demeanor started with a shave each morning, his sergeant in boot camp had told him a thousand years ago.

The man down the way began calling for Irene again. Irene, Horace called in his mind. Irene, are you out there? No one told the man to be quiet. It was about seven and the whole building was waking up and the man calling Irene was not the loudest sound in the world anymore.

“Daddy, you got my smokes? Could use my smokes right about now.”

Horace, unable to stand anymore, slowly sank to the floor. There he found some relief. The more he sat, the more he began to play over the arrest. He had had money in his pocket when he took off his pants the night before, but there was no money when they booked him. And where had Catrina and Elaine been when the police marched him out of the apartment and down to the paddy wagon, with the Sunset’s female security guard standing behind her desk with an “Oh, yes, I told you so” look? Where had they been? He had not seen them. He stretched out his legs and they touched the feet of the sleeping man on the floor. The man roused. “Love don’t mean shit anymore,” the man on the lower bunk said. It was loud enough to wake the man on the floor all the way, and that man sat up and covered his chest with his blanket and looked at Horace, blinking and blinking and getting a clearer picture of Horace the more he blinked.

Reilly did not come for him until the middle of Monday afternoon. Somebody opened the cell door and at first Horace thought the policeman was coming to get one of his cellmates.

“Homer Parkins,” the man with the keys said. The doors were supposed to open electronically, but that system had not worked in a long time.

“Thas me,” Horace said and got to his feet. As he and the man with the keys walked past the other cells, someone said to Horace, “Hey, Pops, you ain’t too old to learn to suck dick.” “Keep moving,” the man with the keys said. “Pops, I’ll give you a lesson when you come back.”

As they poured his things out of a large manila envelope, the two guards behind the desk whispered and laughed. “Everything there?” one of them asked Horace. “Yes.” “Well, good,” the guard said. “I guess we’ll be seein you on your next trip here.” “Oh, leave that old man alone. He’s somebody’s grandfather.” “When they start that old,” the first man said, “it gets in their system and they can’t stop. Ain’t that right, Pops?”

He and Reilly did not say very much after Reilly said he had been surprised to hear from Horace and that he had wondered what had happened to him since Loneese died. Horace said he was eternally grateful to Reilly for bailing him out and that it was all a mistake as well as a long story that he would soon share with him. At Sunset, Reilly offered to take him out for a meal, but Horace said he would have to take a rain check. “Rain check?” Reilly said, smiling. “I didn’t think they said that anymore.”

The key to the apartment worked the way it always had, but something was blocking the door, and he had to force it open. Inside, he found destruction everywhere. On top of the clothes and the mementos of his life, strewn across the table and the couch and the floor were hundreds and hundreds of broken records. He took three steps into the room and began to cry. He turned around and around, hoping for something that would tell him it was not as bad as his eyes first reported. But there was little hope—the salt and pepper shakers had not been touched, the curtains covering the glass door were intact. There was not much beyond that for him to cling to.

He thought immediately of Catrina and Elaine. What had he done to deserve this? Had he not always shown them a good and kind heart? He covered his eyes, but that seemed only to produce more tears, and when he lowered his hands the room danced before him through the tears. To steady himself, he put both hands on the table, which was covered in instant coffee and sugar. He brushed broken glass off the chair nearest him and sat down. He had not got it all off, and he felt what was left through his pants and underwear.

He tried to look around but got no farther than the picture with the Secretary of Defense. It had two cracks in it, one running north to south and the other going northwest to southeast. The photograph was tilting, too, and something told him that if he could straighten the picture it all might not be so bad. He reached out a hand, still crying, but he could not move from the chair.

He stayed as he was through the afternoon and late into the evening, not once moving from the chair, though the tears did stop around five o'clock. Night came and he still did not move. My name is Horace Perkins, he thought just as the sun set. My name is Horace Perkins and I worked many a year at the Pentagon. The apartment became dark, but he did not have it in him to turn on the lights.

The knocking had been going on for more than ten minutes when he finally heard it. He got up, stumbling over debris, and opened the door. Elaine stood there with Darnell, Jr., in her arms.

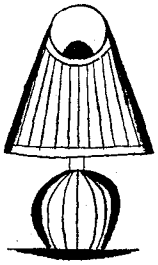
"Horace, you O.K.? I been comin by. I been worried about you, Horace."

He said nothing but opened the door enough for her and the baby to enter.

"It's dark, Horace. What about some light?"

He righted the lamp on the table and turned it on.

"Jesus in Heaven, Horace! What happened! My Lord Jesus! I can't believe this." The baby, startled by his mother's words, began to cry. "It's O.K.," she said to him, "It's O.K.," and gradually the baby calmed down. "Oh, Horace, I'm so sorry. I really am. This is the worst thing I've ever seen in my life." She touched his shoulder with her free hand, but he shrugged it off. "Oh, my dear God! Who could do this?"



She went to the couch and moved enough trash aside for the baby. She pulled a pacifier from her sweater pocket, put it momentarily in her mouth to remove the lint, then put it in the baby's mouth. He appeared satisfied and leaned back on the couch.

She went to Horace, and right away he grabbed her throat. "I'm gonna kill you tonight!" he shouted. "I just wish that bitch Catrina was here so I could kill her, too." Elaine struggled and sputtered out one "please" before he gripped her tighter. She beat his arms but that seemed to give him more strength. She began to cry. "I'm gonna kill you tonight, girl, if it's the last thing I do."

The baby began to cry, and she turned her head as much as she could to look at him. This made him slap her twice, and she started to fall, and he pulled her up and, as he did, went for a better grip, which was time enough for her to say, "Don't kill me in front of my son, Horace." He loosened his hands. "Don't kill me in front of my boy, Horace." Her tears ran down her face and over and into his hands. "He don't deserve to see me die. You know that, Horace."

"Where, then!"

"Anywhere but in front of him. He's innocent of everything."

He let her go and backed away.

"I did nothin, Horace," she whispered. "I give you my word, I did nothin." The baby screamed, and she went to him and took him in her arms.

Horace sat down in the same chair he had been in.

"I would not do this to you, Horace."

He looked at her and at the baby, who could not take his eyes off Horace, even through his tears.

One of the baby's cries seemed to get stuck in his throat, and to release it the baby raised a fist and punched the air, and finally the cry came free. How does a man start over with nothing? Horace thought. Elaine came near him, and the baby still watched him as his crying lessened. How does a man start from scratch?

He leaned down and picked up a few of the broken albums from the floor and read the labels. "I would not hurt you for anything in the world, Horace," Elaine said. Okeh Phonograph Corporation. Domino Record Co. RCA Victor. Darnell, Jr.,'s crying stopped, but he continued to look down at the top of Horace's head. Cameo Record Corporation, N.Y. "You been too good to me for me to hurt you like this, Horace." He dropped the records one at a time: "It Takes an Irishman to Make Love." "I'm Gonna Pin a Medal on the Girl I Left Behind." "Ragtime Soldier Man." "Whose Little Heart Are You Breaking Now." "The Syncopated Walk." ♦

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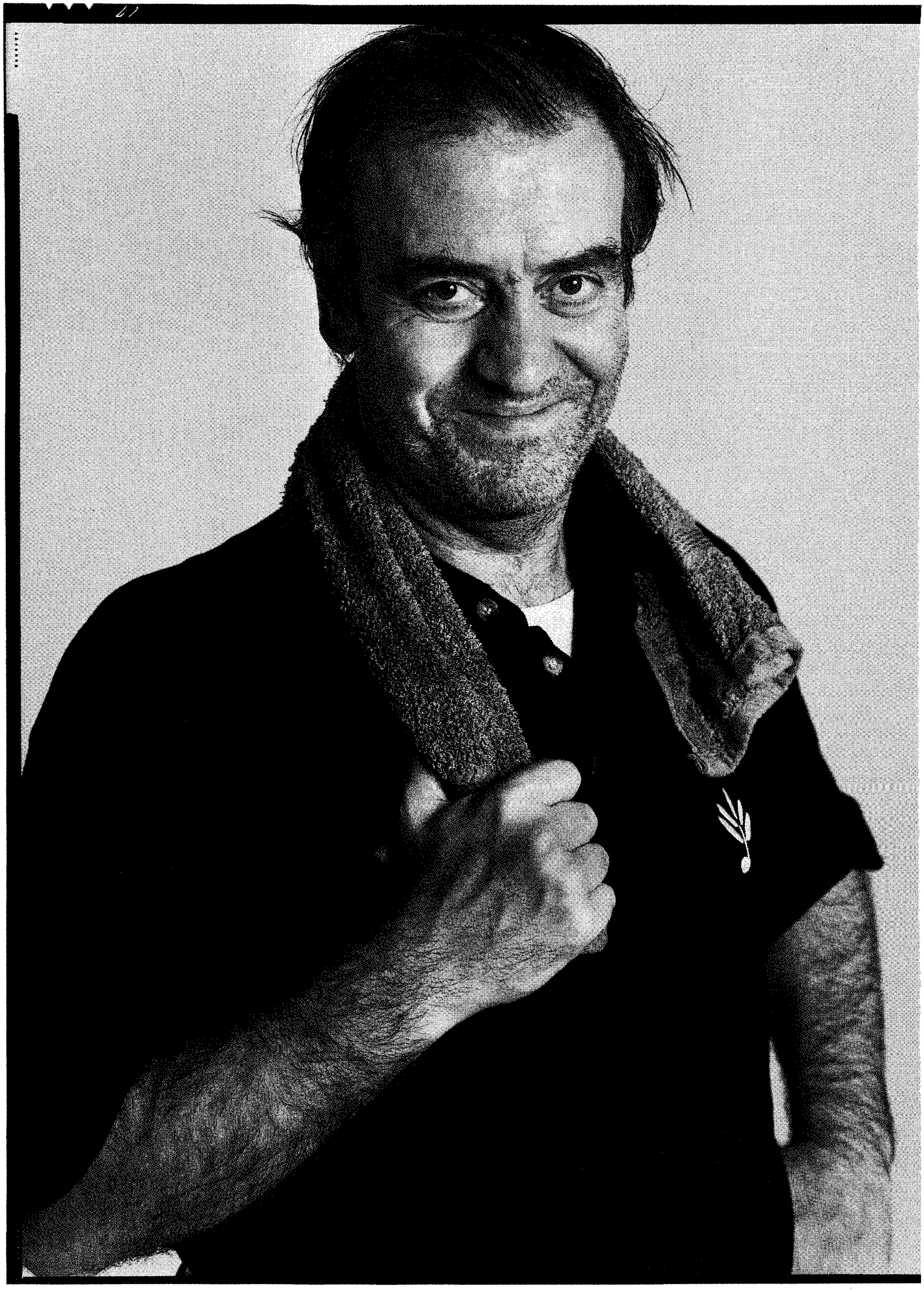

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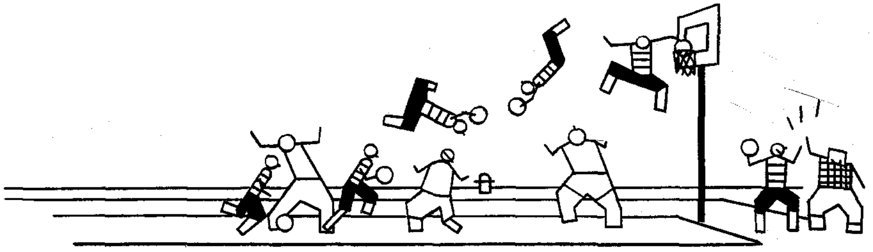

MUSICAL EVENTS

INVISIBLE CITIES

Valery Gergiev's festival of Russian opera.

BY ALEX ROSS

Andrew Porter, who wrote warmly erudite music criticism for this magazine from 1972 to 1992, used to travel out of town for stagings of neglected Russian operas, commenting that even a threadbare production of something like "Ruslan and Ludmila" gave off more sparks than a lot of standard operatic fare. This was before the advent of Valery Gergiev, the fiery angel of the Russian repertory, who has seemingly sworn not to get a full night's sleep until Glinka's operas are as familiar as Puccini's. Early this month, Gergiev arrived in town with the collected forces of the Maryinsky Theatre, of St. Petersburg, bearing his latest enthusiasms. The company gave twenty performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, under the auspices of the Lincoln Center Festival. On the bill were Prokofiev's "Semyon Kotko," Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh," Moussorgsky's "Khovanshchina," Rubinstein's "The Demon," Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin," and, the odd man out, Verdi's "Macbeth." It wasn't exactly a cavalcade of hits, and attendance suffered. But those who made it to Lincoln Center in the July heat were given a crash course in the golden age of Russian opera.

Gergiev had some rocky moments guest-conducting at the Met last season, so it was good to see him back in form, summoning phenomenal sounds from the Maryinsky orchestra. One sharp observer of the music scene suggested that the Met should have given its own orchestra free tickets to all these shows, so that the players could hear what style Gergiev has been trying to elicit from them. The Maryinsky's strings are second to none; when its remarkable double basses sing out at full voice, a new dimension is added to the music. Woodwind lines glow like daubs of color on a canvas. Trombones and tuba make noise to wake the dead. The chorus matches the orchestra in richness of timbre, and the singers, even when overworked, give their all. This is red-blooded opera—risky, raucous, and alive.

"Semyon Kotko," the most obscure of the Maryinsky's offerings, was written in 1938 and 1939, at the height of Stalin's Terror. Set in the period after the Bolshevik Revolution, it tells of a Ukrainian soldier who beats back Germans and capitalists and learns how to be a bland Soviet hero. Despite its impeccable Socialist-Realist plot, it was doomed to failure from the outset. A week before Prokofiev finished the vocal score, his collaborator, the director Vsevolod Meyerhold, was arrested. Then, in August, 1939, the Hitler-Stalin pact was announced, necessitating a last-minute revision of the anti-German element. The stench of Stalinism permeates the scenario; Tkachenko, who betrays his village to the Germans, stands in for the kulaks, or wealthy peasants, who were among the principal victims of the Terror. Satires of kulaks belong with cartoons of banker Jews in the gallery of genocidal stereotypes.

Yet there is stupendous music in "Kotko." The ending of Act III, in which the Germans and the Ukrainian anti-Bolsheviks overrun the village, rivals the Coronation Scene of "Boris Godunov" in sheer malevolent splendor. Indeed, Prokofiev modelled his musical material partly on Moussorgsky's: as in the Coronation Scene, a chord progression sways across the interval of the tritone, in unrelenting pendulum motion. Over these chords, singers and orchestra repeat downward motifs of lamentation, building to such an intense articulation of despair—"They plunder and burn / Our Ukraine is lost / All is lost!"—that listeners may end up thinking not of the events of 1917-18 but of the Ukrainian "terror famine" of 1932-33. "Kotko" hardly seems like a subversive piece, but it is legitimate to ask why Prokofiev thought back to "Boris Godunov," the tale of a homicidal Russian ruler, when he was supposed to be depicting a German invasion.

Gergiev delivered this quintessential problem opera with all possible conviction. Yevgeny Strashko showed a solid, agile tenor in the title role; Irina Mataeva had lustrous moments as Kotko's lover, Sofia; Fedor Kuznetsov, a superb young bass, found power and pathos in Tkachenko; Irina Loskutova led the lamentations of Act III with a big, piercing soprano. Yuri Alexandrov's production worked hard to rescue "Kotko" from Soviet kitsch, and mostly succeeded, although the decision to include Maoist garb and little red books in the final tableau was a puzzler. Better was the idea of staging the Act III finale in the manner of the legendary film director Andrei Tarkovsky. One of the most unforgettable sequences in Tarkovsky's "Andrei Rublev" depicts the sacking of Vladimir Cathedral; throughout the scene, a church censer is shown swinging from

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

When Gergiev holds the baton, the result is red-blooded opera—risky, raucous, and alive.

side to side, in ironic counterpoint to the mayhem. The director used a similar image in his Covent Garden production of "Boris." In "Semyon Kotko," the Tarkovsky pendulum, a marker of Russian destiny and doom, becomes, ominously, a globe of the world oscillating in the air.

In March, 1940, a month after Meyerhold was shot, Anna Akhmatova wrote a poem titled "The Way of All the Earth," in which she pictured herself as "the woman of Kitezh," wandering in search of eternal rest. Kitezh, in Russian folklore, is a city that dissolves into mist when invaders approach, leaving behind only the ringing of its bells. The legend acquired new life in 1903, when Rimsky-Korsakov, working with his librettist Vladimir Belsky, made it the basis of a post-Wagnerian ritual opera. In their hands, Kitezh becomes something more like the heavenly city of Zion—a Christian paradise that lurks in the folds of the Russian landscape. Rimsky-Korsakov lavished on the piece the utmost refinements of his style: opulent, glittering orchestration; attenuated, silvery melodies; an idiosyncratic harmonic method that amounts to a parallel universe of enchanted chords. Granted, there is a great deal of Wagner in the score—perhaps too much. Every fifteen minutes or so, the strings play the "Magic Fire" music. But Rimsky subsumes all these effects into his own surpassingly gentle vision: of a love persisting past the point of death; of callow betrayal and saintly forgiveness; of a city indivisible from nature.

Back in 1995, Gergiev brought a fairly traditional staging of "Kitezh" to the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The new production, by Dmitry Cherniakov, is altogether bolder. Kitezh has become a kind of synthetic Russian community, a blend of tsarist, Soviet, and contemporary motifs. If I am not mistaken, Cherniakov took many of his images from the Akhmatova poem—a "charred depot," a woman carried on a sled, a "white ascetic rite." Less Akhmatova-like was the image of the Tartar prince riding in on a sci-fi contraption straight out of the "Alien" movies. Despite a baffling lack of activity during the lovers' entry into Kitezh—did someone miss a cue?—this was a compelling vision from an imaginative director. Unfortunately, I saw it with one of the less distinguished casts of the festival; Sergei Alexashkin was the only standout, singing Yuri with a booming, charismatic bass.

In "Kotko" and "Kitezh," homeland idylls are overrun by marauders. In "Khovanshchina," the enemies come from within, and no one is sure who they really are. It is impossible to summarize the plot of so byzantine an opera in a sentence or two: suffice to say that it succeeds in making a plausible evening's entertainment out of the seventeenth-century split between the Old Believers sect of the Russian Orthodox Church and the modernizing forces of Peter the Great. The achievement is not entirely Moussorgsky's; he died at the age of forty-two, leaving behind a manuscript that was an unorchestrated mess, and its epic shape only came into focus eight decades later, when Shostakovich undertook to make his own performing version. The secret to Shostakovich's orchestration is in the brass. There are so many gleaming chords and burnished pedal tones that the opera seems to rest on steel girders.

The Maryinsky has re-created Leonid Baratov's 1960 staging of the Shostakovich version—a picturesque, storybook production that neatly frames the action. Gergiev, in some of his finest moments on the podium, brought out both the massiveness of the conception and the poetry of its detail; you had a sense of human voices caught in the machinery of history. Olga Borodina sang the part of Marfa, who has forsaken her aristocratic origins to join the Old Believers; it is one of the mezzo's signature roles, and she invested every note and every gesture with meaning. Three first-class low voices—Valery Alexeev, Gennady Bezzubenkov, and Alexashkin—sang Shaklovity, Dosifei, and Prince Khovansky. Best of all was the Maryinsky chorus: it gave lusty power to various mobs and militias, and also brought us deep inside the distant world of the Old Believers, who immolate themselves rather than submit to the will of Peter the Great. Richard Taruskin, in a splendid essay on the opera, speaks of the Old Believers "stepping out of history and into eternity." They, too, are walking to Kitezh. ♦

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BOOKS

BIG DEAD WHITE MALE

Ralph Waldo Emerson turns two hundred.

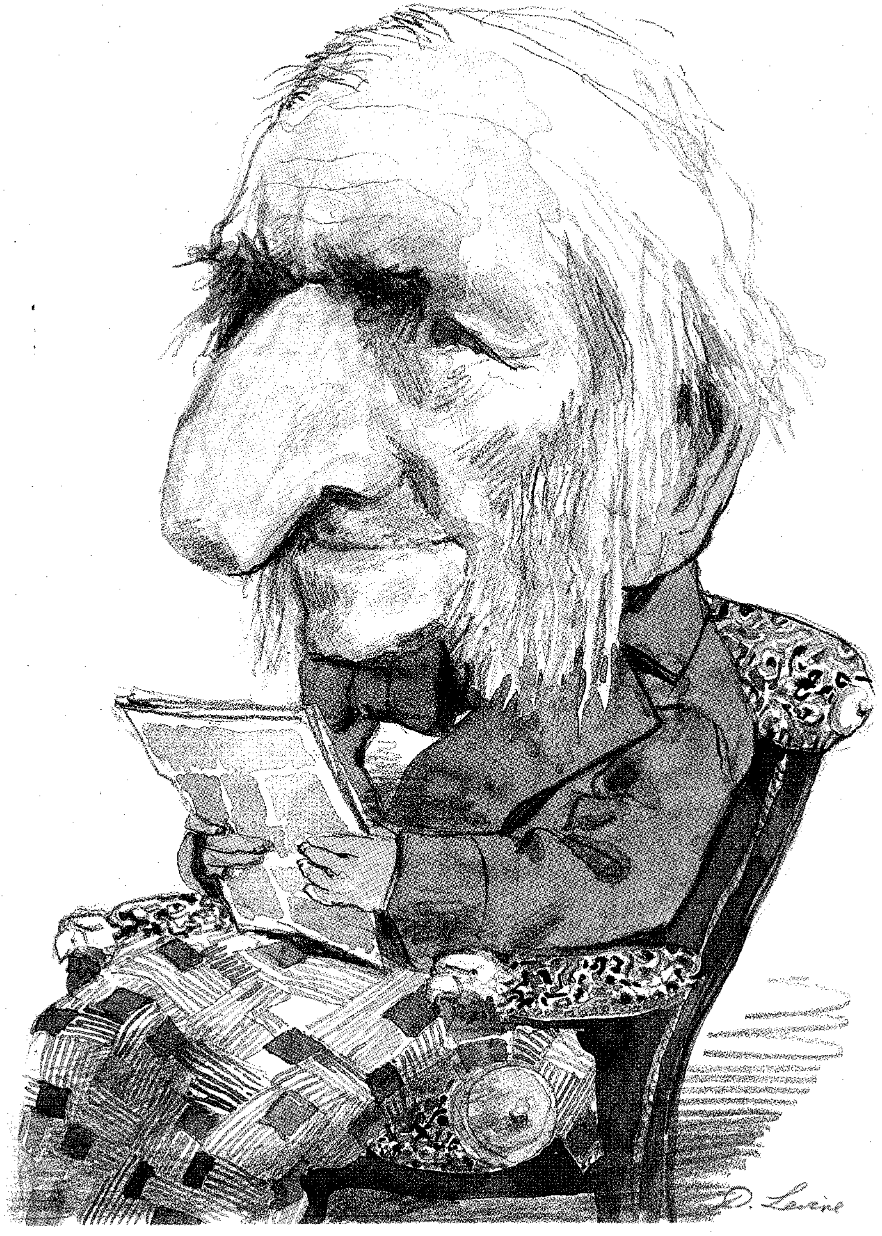
BY JOHN UPDIKE

The observances this year of the two-hundredth anniversary of Ralph Waldo Emerson's birth, in 1803, have been measured but widespread: conferences were scheduled in the great man's adopted home town of Concord, Massachusetts, and, this fall, in Beijing and Rome. The year's issue of the *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History* is devoted to Emerson; a bicentennial exhibition ran at Harvard's Houghton Library from March to June; and in his birth month of May it was possible in Concord to mingle with actors playing the roles of such friends as Henry David Thoreau and the Alcott sisters and such significant relatives as his eldest daughter, Ellen, and his redoubtable aunt, Mary Moody Emerson. There were many newspaper editorials, including one in the *Times* that credited Emerson with formulating the "pernicious, and currently thriving, philosophy of American individualism run amok—call it American self-absorption." The Republican tax cut, tilted toward the rich, and the Administration's us-first, go-it-alone foreign policy, not to mention the financial rapacity of Enron and Tyco executives and Wall Street mis-advisers, were all traced by the *Times* to Emerson's gospel of self-reliance.

In the world of books—the world that preserves Emerson's memory and message, now that his hypnotic baritone voice and reassuring platform presence are no more—the celebration has been restrained. The Boston firm of David R. Godine has issued a pleasing anthology, "A Year with Emerson," edited by Richard Grossman, and with typically fine engravings by Barry Moser ($26.95). Emerson, a disbeliever in "foolish consistency" who customarily assembled his lectures from thoughts and sentences written in journals that he began keeping as a Harvard undergraduate, has always lent himself well to being excerpted. His published essays—refined and expanded versions of the lectures—can seem unduly long and, once read, slippery in the mind. The three hundred and sixty-five items assembled in this "Daybook" are drawn from letters and poems as well as from the canonized prose; while it is hard to imagine even the most devout Emersonian undertaking the pious discipline of a daily reading, Grossman's arranged and annotated progress through the year hops about in lively fashion and often surprises us. Surprise was an aesthetic effect Emerson cherished, as we read in the journal entry titled "Good Writing":

> All writing should be selection in order to drop every dead word. Why do you not save out of your speech or thinking only the vital things—the spirited mot which amused or warmed you when you spoke it—because of its luck & newness. I have just been reading, in this careful book of a most intelligent & learned man, a number of flat conventional words & sentences. If a man would learn to read his own manuscript severely—becoming really a third person, & search only for what interested him, he would blot to purpose—& how every page would gain! Then all the words will be sprightly, & every sentence a surprise.

The passage sets out, in small, Emerson's priorities—spontaneity over convention, vitality over formality, luck and newness



Emerson's gospel of self-reliance has been blamed for selfish American individualism.

DAVID LEVINE

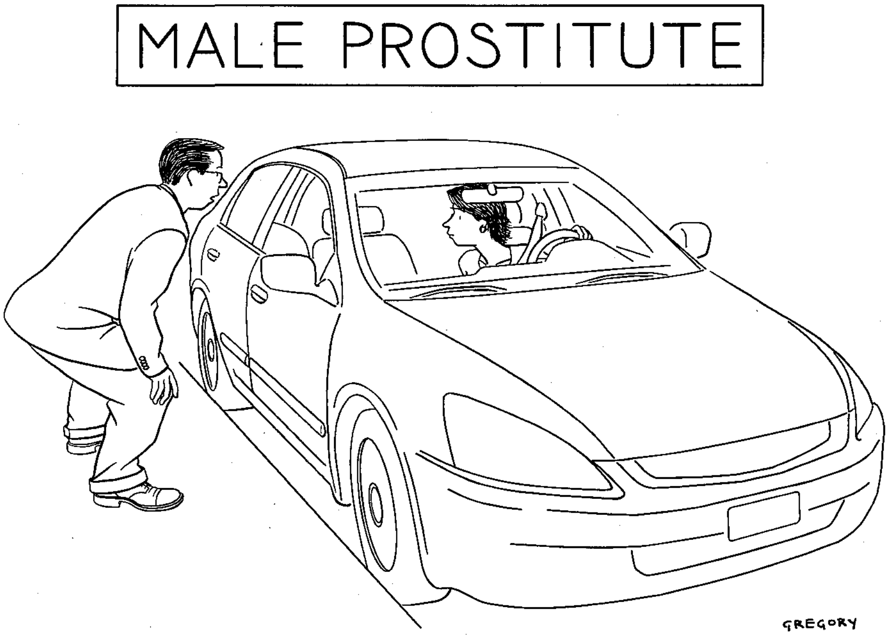
over system. Out with what is dead! But keep, along with the spirited mot, a third-person detachment. Though he averred, "I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*," he was a scrupulous and patient reviser, who extensively reworked most of his lectures for their appearance in print.

Also this spring, Princeton issued a slim volume, "Understanding Emerson: 'The American Scholar' and His Struggle for Self-Reliance," by Kenneth S. Sacks ($29.95). Sacks, a professor of history at Brown, describes the heated intellectual context in which Emerson delivered, on August 31, 1837, the annual address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard, a speech afterward titled "The American Scholar" and destined to become, according to Sacks, "the most famous in American academic history." It, and Emerson's address to the senior class of the Harvard Divinity School the following July, staked out his turf and made his name. Both addresses were, beneath their flowers of rhetoric, inflammatorily hostile to the host institution, from which Emerson had graduated in 1821, thirtieth in a class of fifty-nine. Harvard, in Professor Sacks's analysis, was a bastion of Unitarianism, which had become the religion of the ruling élite of Boston. Unitarianism, which in 1819 was called "the half-way house to infidelity" by a professor at the rival Andover Theological Seminary, and is now seen, with its sister the Universalist Church, as the ultimate in liberal Protestantism, by 1837 had acquired an aristocratic and conservative bias that disdained populist revivalism and, closer to home, so-called Transcendentalism, an intellectual movement derived from the mystic streak in Goethe, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Carlyle. Emerson praised such writers for being "blood-warm" and for perceiving "the worth of the vulgar"; these were fighting words, as was his insistence on the great value of the individual person's subjectivity. According to Sacks:

> Harvard-Unitarian culture found spiritual and intellectual confirmation in empirical proof, scientific progress, and material success. Emerson acknowledged understanding derived from observation of external phenomena, but believed that the more important truths are eternal and intuitive, emerging from within. Ostensibly a struggle between the schools of Locke and Kant, after 2200 years it still pretty much came down to Aristotle versus Plato. But Emerson's scholar wasn't the elite Guardian of Plato's *Republic;* it was instead Socrates, son of a stone mason.

European Romanticism, rephrased for the American democracy, posed a revolutionary threat to a rationalist élite. At the same time, it upset Christian orthodoxy, even the attenuated Unitarian form. Emerson's Divinity School address, amid its offenses, reduced Jesus to a sublimely typical man, one who was "true to what is in you and me," alive to the "daily miracle" of "man's life," and manifesting not miracles and an impossible sanctity but "a sweet, natural goodness, a goodness like thine and mine, and that so invites thine and mine to be and to grow." To the future ministers, Emerson, having vividly sketched the dismal state of the contemporary church—"It has lost its grasp on the affection of the good, and the fear of the bad"—said, "Cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity." He admonished them "to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil." That the terrain to which his auditors are released is dauntingly featureless did not curb Emerson's own delight in solitary freedom. His father, a dry conforming Unitarian clergyman, had died early, leaving little legacy of affection in his seven-year-old son's memory, and Emerson had liberated himself from a parish minister's duties, including the personally distasteful one of administering the Lord's Supper, before the age of thirty. Yet he continued supply preaching throughout the eighteen-thirties, and called his public lectures "lay sermons." His two aggressively large-minded Harvard addresses advanced his burgeoning career as a lyceum speaker, a free-ranging secular prophet.

Proper Boston resisted his message. Attending a Harvard ceremony not long after giving the Divinity School address, he noted in his journal, "The young people & the mature hint at odium, & aversion of faces to be presently encountered in society. I say no: I fear it not." Sacks relates how one Convers Francis, taking tea with a "family belonging to the straitest sect of Boston conservatism," found that his hosts "abhor & abominate R. W. Emerson as a sort of mad dog: & when I defended that pure and angelic spirit . . . they laughed at me with amazement." By this light, Emerson's Transcendentalism, with its claims in these two addresses that "all men have sublime thoughts," that "the active soul" is something "every man is entitled to," and that, "if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him," formed part of the Jacksonian revolution whereby the democ-



"Oh yeah, baby, I'll listen to you—I'll listen to you all night long."

racy's yeomen sought to take power and responsibility from an élite of merchants and planters.

The weightiest bicentennial volume thus far has been "Emerson," by the Harvard professor Lawrence Buell (Harvard; $29.95). A three-hundred-and-thirty-four-page rumination in seven chapters, the book has the relaxed, sometimes personal air of a graduate-student seminar rather than the clarion tones of a lecture in an undergraduate survey course. We are assumed to know something about Emerson already. The biographical facts are swiftly sketched and subjected to skeptical inquiry; the patriotic "jingoism" of his stirring ceremonial hymn beginning "By the rude bridge that arched the flood," for example, is minimized by Buell's conclusion that "Emerson's own concern was with values that stand the test of time and unite the world." Buell's repeatedly solicitous, corrective slant has the unintended effect of showing how thoroughly Emerson, who spoke to wake up the democratic masses to the powers within them, is now captive to the contentious, incestuous circles of academe. An endorsement on the back of the jacket, by Sacvan Bercovitch, the author of "The Puritan Origins of the American Self," salutes Buell's book as "the harvest of the past half-century of Emersonian revaluations and the harbinger, guide, and provocation for the next generations of Emerson scholars and critics"—as if Emerson scholars and critics, in their generations, are world enough. Buell rarely pitches his voice above classroom level. Saving type at the price of obscurity, he identifies many key quotations by their page numbers in "CW," specified on page xi as "*The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 12 vols., Ed. Edward Waldo Emerson. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1903-1904," leaving those who happen to lack that twelve-volume set from the outset of the last century to guess, often, what essay is being quoted. Such ill-equipped readers must guess, too, at the shadowy content of scholarly disputes that are second nature to the sixty-four-year-old Buell, who in his preface admits he has been mulling Emerson over since he was twenty-six.

He makes an extensive case against "a present-day literary-Americanist standpoint" that, in his view, takes too seriously the concluding peroration of "The American Scholar" ("We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe. . . . We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. . . . A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men") and not seriously enough Emerson as a global intellectual shaped by European and Asian (Hindu, Buddhist, Persian Sufi) influences and influential, in turn, abroad, with declared admirers ranging from Matthew Arnold and Friedrich Nietzsche to such outriggers as the Cuban poet-revolutionary José Martí, the Australian Charles Harpur, the Jewish Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel, and—a great catch—Marcel Proust. But who is arguing? To someone of Emerson's generation, European thought and writing was almost all there was; Puritan sermons, Benjamin Franklin's blithe compositions, the Founding Fathers' chiselled eloquence, Washington Irving's sketches, and James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales—all were easily overlookable by a serious American aspirant to high thought and poetry in the early nineteenth century. To Emerson, Poe, his only peer as a homegrown critical and creative mind, was "the jingle man."

In the heavily politicized world of contemporary American academic studies, nuances of emphasis loom with the menace of frontal assaults. Buell frequently sounds defensive, admitting that "Emerson's significance as a force in U.S. literary history has shrunk since the ethnic renaissances of the twentieth century, the late-century expansion of the American canon, and increasing disenchantment with the whole idea of literary canonicity." The category of "canonicity," of practical concern mostly to textbook manufacturers, distracts the celebrant from his own aesthetic reactions and evaluations. The "so-called new Americanist criticism of the last two decades," we read, "tends to see the tensions between margin and center (in particular of race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality) as more central to U.S. cultural history than any supposed aesthetic mainstream. . . . No longer does it seem so self-evident that Emerson and Transcendentalism were the gateway to U.S. literary emergence." When was it self-evident? It wasn't to his contemporaries Melville and Hawthorne, who both took a satiric and suspect view of Emerson's soul-talk. "This Plato who talks thro' his nose," Melville called him, adding, "To one who has weathered Cape Horn as a common sailor what stuff all this is."

Professor Buell, while trying to give Emerson the benefit of his forty years of close and fond attention, gives evidence of having weathered many storms of political correctness. He seems, within his discourse, distracted by hectoring students and fractious fellow-faculty. Of Emerson's reluctance to join the militant abolitionists, it has to be explained that he had "initial scruples about joining what today seems a far more self-evidently righteous cause than it did to the great majority of nineteenth-century northern whites in the 1840s and 1850s." Buell pleads that "overall, Emerson's racism was certainly no greater than that of most northern white abolitionists, and far less than the average northern white." Again, Buell confides, "Nor, despite his awareness of and support for American diversity, did he cease to think of Englishness as the dominant ethnic influence in the making of America and especially of New England"—as if in 1850 any other view were possible. Bows are awkwardly made to severer theorists:

> Myra Jehlen argues that Emerson's vision of man coming into his godship through the conquest of nature reads suspiciously like an apology for westward expansion. Christopher Newfield argues that Emerson's appeal to transpersonal authorities like aboriginal self and the "orphic poet" who says the last words in *Nature* implies a forfeiture of individualism and acquiescence to dominant cultural forces that make for a parallel between Emerson's life course and the rise of corporatism in nineteenth-century America.

Buell's account of Emerson's responsiveness to intellectual women like Margaret Fuller, who believed that his "model of personal transformation" opened "the door to female liberation," is accompanied by the gratuitous disclaimer "though admiration was apt to be tinged with lingering misogynistic judgmentalism." On the matter of theistic belief, Buell smilingly enlists in a collegial infidelity, with a frown for today's zealots: Emerson's frequent mention of God "is hardly calculated to appeal to the majority of university researchers who presently dominate Emerson studies. For the most part, we are a thoroughly secularized lot, all the more skeptical of God-talk given the rise of fervid evangelical power blocks at home and abroad."

A hundred years after Emerson's centennial was declared a school holiday in Concord and marked by an oration by William James and a public prayer that the spirit of Emerson inspire all present, he is put forward gingerly, apologetically, as a devalued stock on which we might still want to take a flyer. Buell was quoted in the Boston *Globe* (which reviewed his book as "scholarly natterings") as saying, "If you're looking for strong guidance, look elsewhere. But if you're looking for the courage to maintain sanity and resolution when the rest of society seems to have gone mad, Emerson may be your man." The endorsement seems excessively hedged, linking the sage's value to a presumed madness in society. Emerson was too much a realist, I think, to dismiss the workings of a society as mad, even a society like his own, passionately riven antebellum America. He pitched his palace of the Ideal on the particularities and rationale of what existed. One of Buell's few wholehearted sentences exclaims, "How many of the great essays end by propelling the reader out into the world!" Yes; Emerson wanted to encourage us, to make us fit for the world.

So *is* there anything left to say, outside the classroom, about the Sage of Concord? Some of his disciples still do excite non-academic interest: Whitman, who credited Emerson with bringing him to a boil, and who received from him a handsome endorsement, triumphantly survives, as a revolutionary versifier and celebrant of his American self. Thoreau is still read without being assigned, and lives as a patron saint of ecologists. Though Emerson extolled Nature, centering his testament "Nature" on its manifestations and opening his Divinity School address with a lyrical evocation of the summer in progress, he was not a naturalist. He wrote about people, people in their stressed psychic anatomies, and, as he aged, people in history and society. These later, more worldly writings better suit our modern taste—more concrete, less high-flown. Mark Van Doren, in assembling the Viking Portable Emerson back in 1946, leaned heavily upon "English Traits" and the short biographies and omitted many of the relatively youthful philosophical essays. "For he was at his best," Van Doren wrote, "not when he was basic, not when he was trying to understand the man he was, but when he was being that man, when he was applying the ideas which that man had furnished him. He needed matter to illuminate."

Yet the later, more material and genially circumstantial Emerson is not the one whose bicentennial we celebrate. Were his surviving writings confined to those after, say, 1850, they would be remembered the way Washington Irving's travel and historical writings are, and Emerson as another Unitarian clergyman turned literary intellectual, like George Ripley. Emerson won his high place in American esteem as the founder and proponent of a religion, one of many offshoots and modifications of Christianity—Mormonism, Shakerism, the Millerites—that flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century as Calvinism, with its baleful predestinarian God, lost its hold. Emerson's inspiriting stroke of genius was to rephrase and reëmphasize the dualism of Christianity in palatable terms adapted from German philosophy and European Romanticism. On the second page of his first book, "Nature," published in 1836 and based, we learn from Buell, on ideas in an early sermon, we read:

> Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking, therefore, all that is separate from us, all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE.

A year later, in "The American Scholar," the "not me" becomes the "other me," and a relation between the two entities is drawn: "The world,—this shadow of the soul, or *other me*, lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself." In "Nature" 's seventh chapter, titled "Spirit," an intermediary element had appeared, on both sides of the cleavage: "The noblest ministry of nature is to stand as the apparition of God. It is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it." The universal spirit, a striver, would seem to be God, clad in transparent robes of Kantian idealism: "Idealism saith: matter is a phenomenon, not a substance. . . . Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me." The word "spirit" bounces from the me to the not-me and back again, yet amid this legerdemain Emerson formulates a profound and primitive fact about the human condition—"the total disparity between the evidence of our own being, and the evidence of the world's being." Consciousness creates duality. We exist, to ourselves, non-phenomenally. Our subjective existence is absolute, though indescribable. "The soul *is*," Emerson says in the essay "Compensation." "Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real Being. Essence, or God, is not a relation, or a part, but the whole. Being is the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts and times within itself."

From the absoluteness of the "me" a great deal of religious consolation can be spun. The self is pitted against the vast physical universe as if the two were equal. From "Compensation": "The soul refuses limits, and always affirms an Optimism, never a Pessimism. . . . In the nature of the soul is the compensation for the inequalities of condition." The doctrine is tailor-made for Americans. Emerson's America was also Hawthorne's, which Henry James famously described in a cascade of negatives: "No sovereign, no court, no personal loyalty, no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army . . . no country gentlemen, no palaces, no castles, nor manors," and so on. In a New World so bare and barren, and faced with an overweening Nature such as the species has not encountered since prehistoric migrations, what does a person have? A self. And that is plenty, Emerson assures us. "In all my lectures," he stated in his journals, "I have taught one doctrine, the infinitude of the private man." Possessing his own infinity, a man has nothing to fear, not even (though Emerson treads light on the thin ice of personal immortality) death itself.

In essay after essay, waving aside evil as "merely privative," Emerson justifies optimism and declares a holiday for the hard-pressed American soul. Like most faiths, his makes light of the world and its usual trials. His most pessimistic essay, "Experience"—that in which he declares, "I have set my heart on honesty"—proclaims the transience and shallowness of grief and love: "The great and crescive self, rooted in absolute nature, supplants all relative existence, and ruins the kingdom of mortal friendship and love. . . . We believe in ourselves, as we do not believe in others. We permit all things to ourselves, and that which we call sin in others, is experiment for us." Elsewhere he expresses a brusque impatience with charity and the clamor of worthy causes. "I must be myself," he tells us. "I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you." How well this suits our native bent! In this country, the self is not dissolved in Oriental group-think, or subordinated within medieval hierarchy. Our spiritual essence, it may be, is selfishness; certainly our art, from Whitman to the Abstract Expressionists, flaunts the naked self with a boldness rarely seen in other national cultures. Emerson is matched only by his hero Montaigne, who confessed, "The world always looks outward, I turn my gaze inward; there I fix it, and there I keep it busy. Everyone looks before him; I look within. I have no business but with myself."

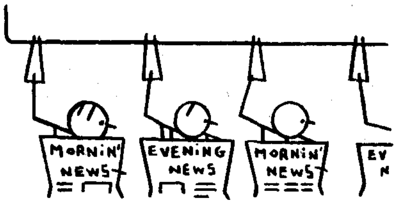
A country imposed on a wilderness needs strong selves. Whether American self-assertiveness fits into today's crammed and touchy world can be debated. But Emerson, with a cobbled-together mythology, in melodious accents that sincerely feigned the old Christian reassurances, sought to instill confidence and courage in his democratic audience, and it is for this, rather than for his mellowed powers of observation and wit, that he is honored, if honored more than read. His relative neglect, a decline from a heyday of gilt-edged uniform editions and soul-stirring fireside perusal, he would have regarded philosophically. He knew how the world eats at our attention. "Experience" ends:

> We dress our garden, eat our dinners, discuss the household with our wives, and these things make no impression, are forgotten next week; but in the solitude to which every man is always returning, he has a sanity and revelations, which in his passage into new worlds he will carry with him. Never mind the ridicule, never mind the defeat: up again, old heart! ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Big House, *by George Howe Colt (Scribner; $26).* In 1903, the author's great-grandfather, a Boston Brahmin named Edward W. Atkinson, built his family a house on Cape Cod, at Wings Neck, the last undeveloped peninsula overlooking Buzzards Bay. The Big House, as this multi-storied conglomeration of gables, dormers, and bays came to be called, included "eleven bedrooms, seven fireplaces, and a warren of closets, cupboards, and crannies that four generations of Wings Neck children have used for games of Sardines." It was also an expensive firetrap with sixty-seven windows in need of attention, leaking roofs, wildlife procreating in its walls, and no indoor shower. In 1992, after agonized debate, the family decided to put it on the market. Colt's account, like the house that lies at its center, is full of surprises and contains more than seems humanly possible: a family memoir, a brief history of the Cape, an investigation of nostalgia, a catalogue of local fauna, a study of class, and a meditation on the privileges and burdens of the past.

In Search of King Solomon's Mines, *by Tahir Shah (Arcade; $24.95).* Shah, a British-educated Afghan aristocrat, arrived in Addis Ababa a few years ago intent on finding the Biblical gold of Solomon. As a historical detective, he's a bust—content with a bogus map and half-baked ideas. His only asset is an ironclad earnestness that borders on the pathological. Blithely descending into bat-infested caves at the merest hint of success, he really believes he's going to find the gold at any moment. Shah's pratfalls garnish his quirky tour of contemporary Ethiopia—a land with all of the ills of modernity and none of its benefits. Ultimately, Shah wins you over with the mad purity of his quest. As he wedges into a Land Cruiser with twenty-three other people or worms his way down mine shafts, he displays the stoic grace of the Victorian explorers he so admires.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, *by Mark Haddon (Doubleday; $22.95).* The fifteen-year-old narrator of this ostensible murder mystery is even more emotionally remote than the typical crime-fiction shamus: he is autistic, prone to fall silent for weeks at a time and unable to imagine the interior lives of others. This might seem a serious handicap for a detective, but when Christopher stumbles on the dead body of his neighbor's poodle, impaled by a pitchfork, he decides to investigate. Christopher understands dogs, whose moods are as circumscribed as his own ("happy, sad, cross and concentrating"), but he's deaf to the nuances of people, and doesn't realize until too late that the clues point toward his own house and a more devastating mystery. This original and affecting novel is a triumph of empathy; whether describing Christopher's favorite dream (of a virus depopulating the planet) or his vision of the universe collapsing in a thunder of stars, the author makes his hero's severely limited world a thrilling place to be.

The Polished Hoe, *by Austin Clarke (Amistad; $24.95).* This novel, by a Canadian writer born in Barbados, explores the brutality of plantation life, not as it was experienced in the fields but in the subtler cruelties inflicted on a worker named Mary, who, as a girl, catches the manager's eye and then becomes his favored mistress and the mother of his only son. Forced into a life of loveless "fooping" but also one of material comfort and privilege, Mary is separated both from her own people and from the white establishment, and spends decades in her "home-prison" contemplating the "ritual and arrangement of life on the Plantation." With an obvious affection for Caribbean cadence and its rum-soaked asides, Clarke unfolds Mary's story through the meandering statement she gives to the police after she has taken gruesome revenge on her "master" using the hoe of the title, the very tool that his attentions enabled her to drop.

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THE ART WORLD

TARGET AMERICA

The view from abroad at the Whitney.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

"The American Effect: Global Perspectives on the United States, 1990-2003," a show at the Whitney Museum of American Art of recent works by fifty mostly little-known artists, filmmakers, and collaborative groups from thirty or so countries, purports to explore foreign views of the U.S.A. The art in it is the typical fare of international exhibitions these days: heavy on mildly diverting installations, videos, and photography and given to easy conceptual japes, which curatorial wall texts carefully explain. With a few sharp exceptions, the works are second-rate or, really, no-rate: hybrid in form and forced in content, belonging to no vital tradition, responding to no one's need. They don't so much advance the show's theme as huddle under it. The oddly poignant effect brought to my mind J. Alfred Prufrock's self-assessment: "not Prince Hamlet" but "an attendant lord . . . Deferential, glad to be of use, / Politic, cautious, and meticulous; / Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse." Public-minded contemporary art today is ever more Prufrockian: parched and riddled with compunction. Most of the artists at the Whitney are young, but many seem in a hurry to be careworn with age.

Here are examples of what I mean by no-rate art: a big installation by the Frenchman Gilles Barbier in which veristic sculptures of geriatric superheroes (Superman, et al.) slump in the television room of a nursing home; photographs by Danwen Xing of masses of parts from junked computers, which, we are told, are exported from America to be picked over for salvage by poor Chinese; photographs by Yongsuk Kang of a South Korean island that is used by American forces for bombing practice; photographic self-portraits of Fiona Foley, an Australian Aborigine, posing as a Seminole Indian; and a cowboy image rendered in cutout coca leaves by the Colombian Miguel Angel Rojas. All these works are derivative of established artists—Edward Kienholz in the case of Barbier and Richard Misrach in that of Kang—but "influence" is too strong a word for what's afoot here. The artists neither develop nor challenge received artistic ideas but churn them.

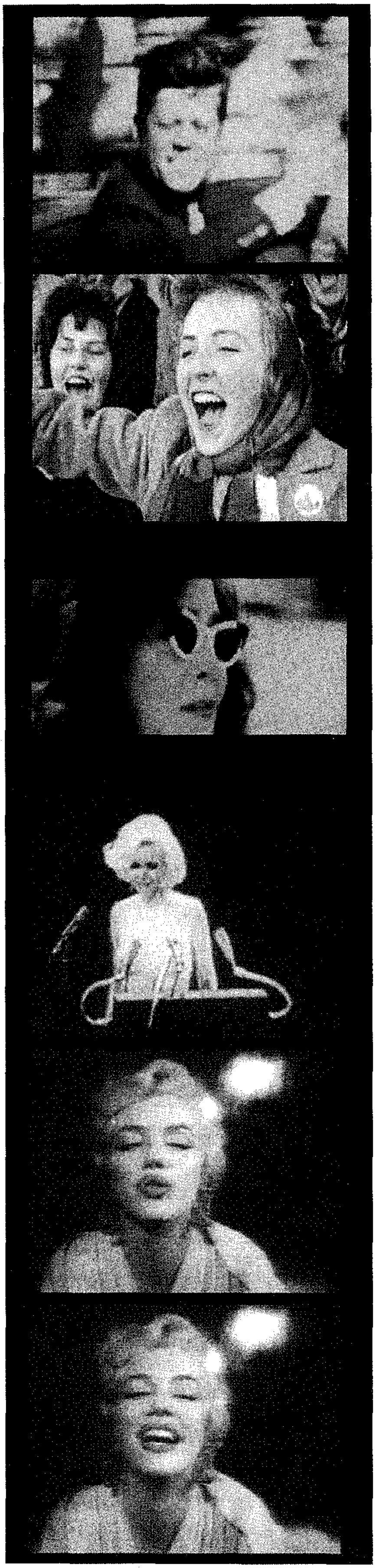
In tone, "The American Effect" is vaguely reproachful of America while anxious to mollify thin-skinned viewers. It is like a lavishly illustrated op-ed piece of the virtuously worried sort, which takes up some current discontent and, after sufficient on-the-one-hand-and-on-the-othering, sets it back down in the same place. The show and its attractive catalogue emit whiffs of the anti-Americanism that is common today among the world's intelligentsias (parts of our own included), but is "balanced" with tokens of affection. At the show, I heard a middle-aged man remark with palpable relief, "Well, it could have been worse!" It just couldn't have been very enjoyable. Determinedly political art is generally depressing. It forfeits creativity's inclination to praise life. An overriding sense of worldly emergency can vindicate the sacrifice, but I feel little such urgency in this show. There is mainly a conventional righteousness. Artists naturally strive to please their patrons. The marching order at the Whitney is soft-core critique.

The catalogue introduction, by Lawrence Rinder, the Whitney's curator of contemporary art, quotes Crèvecoeur and Tocqueville on the way to suggesting that we Americans should be more attentive to how others see us. This leaves out the difficulty of specifying an "us" in a wildly heterogeneous, essentially fictive nation; but let that go. Essays range from a witty meditation on American-style hyperabundance by Luc Sante to a shot of straight polemical sulfur by the Pakistani Tariq Ali: "What we are witnessing today is not a 'war against terror,' but the first shots in a new struggle for hegemony over former allies." Best is a contribution by Ian Buruma, "Sweet Violence," which addresses the thrill of Schadenfreude that many well-off, educated people around the world felt on September 11th. Buruma argues that America's ideals and promises guarantee resentment precisely among people abroad who are most excited by them. There are grounds other than personal bitterness for opposing American power and influence, of course, but a distinctive psychological tic has come to mark the world's cosmopolitan sets, which notably include artists.

Buruma writes, "Those who don't aspire to American success, or an American life-style, or American recognition, don't feel that special humiliation of the disappointed supplicant, that sense of inadequacy that comes from longing for something forever out of reach." That "special humiliation" is intensified by American exports beyond movies and advertising. "Bookstores in Beijing, no less than in Hamburg or Bombay, have shelves piled up with the works of U.S. academics theorizing about their own marginality. So it is not surprising, really, that there are times when frustration tips over into fantasies of revenge." Such being the case, it speaks for Lawrence Rinder's caution that only two works in "The American Effect" managed to offend me. An installation by the Chilean Cristóbal Lehyt finds significance in the fact that the overthrow of Salvador Allende, in 1973, occurred on September 11th. Makoto Aida's huge hinged screen in many mediums pictures an air raid by Japanese Zeroes on Manhattan. More typical of the show is an installation by the Irishman Gerard Byrne in which two actors, on video, enact a dialogue between Lee Iacocca and Frank Sinatra which appeared as a magazine ad for the Chrysler Imperial in 1980. The exercise is passably droll but awfully strenuous. Byrne chews more than he bites off.

Two terrific videos by a German named Bjørn Melhus almost justify the show. Both say, in effect—one angrily, the other wistfully—"America drives me crazy." "America Sells," seven minutes long, intersperses shots of gross American advertising in Berlin with footage of an open-air performance there (at a celebration of national reunification in 1990) by an "inspirational" American singing troupe of talent-free, frighteningly perky kids. They shrill, "America lives in the hearts of all the people. / America, want it for all," then pause while a barker hawks T-shirts. It's mortifying. Melhus's other video, "Far Far Away," shot on film, stars the artist minimally dressed up as two versions of Dorothy from "The Wizard of Oz," conversing by telephone with each other in disjointed snippets of dialogue from the movie's German dub. One doppelgänger speaks chipperly from outdoor sites in New York and San Francisco. The sad other is confined to a small apartment in Germany. Haunted by a sense of empty distances, the thirty-nine-minute piece generates an astonishing range of emotions. Dorothy in Germany pours out her longings to Toto—a banal ceramic dog figurine. Dorothy in America looks lost and bereft, even as she gushes about the Emerald City. In this poem of an inaccessible Oz, one feels close to the heart of Buruma's "special humiliation." Few of the show's other artists attain comparable sublimity—two who do are the Serbian Zoran Naskovski and the Canadian-born Mark Lewis, with video projections about the John F. Kennedy assassination and the good life in Southern California.

One penetrating criticism of the imperial culture of the United States is tacit in the show. It involves syntheses of native artistic traditions with American forms and themes. Call this the hula-skirt syndrome: the local becoming vestigial in a global forest of signs, where the big trees are American. In one case, the result is exhilarating. The Congolese sculptor Bodys Isek Kingelez's very large "New Manhattan City 3021" features incredibly ingenious, funny, and beautiful maquettes of futuristic skyscrapers; it bespeaks a resilient, omnivorous integrity in West African culture, which has been producing a fair amount of buoyant art. More to the melancholy point are paintings in the styles of Mughal miniatures, Japanese prints, and Spanish colonial portraiture which caricature American politicians and symbols. Rather than efficiently mocking their subjects, such works callously debase their own heritage. Cosmopolitanism may be the world's destiny, and even its best hope for redemption, but there's no end of loss and pain in the phenomenon. Those potent, consequential feelings are ill served by an event as "politic, cautious, and meticulous"—and as trifling—as "The American Effect." ♦



Stills from "Death in Dallas" (2000), a video projection by the Serbian artist Zoran Naskovski.

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

HORSE POWER

At the races with "Seabiscuit."

BY DAVID DENBY

"Seabiscuit" is a triumph-of-the-equine-spirit movie. The legendary horse of the nineteen-thirties—small, knobby-kneed, and often torpid, with an irregular gait and an uncertain temper—is all heart: he wins every race by overtaking the field just before the finish line. Intelligent but perverse, he has to *want* to win in order to do so, and, when he does, he makes the humans who care about him overcome their own difficulties, too. At least, that's the way Laura Hillenbrand told the story in her vigorously written account from 2001 of the amazing animal that became a national obsession. Allowing for some condensation and a few invented episodes, the movie "Seabiscuit" follows Hillenbrand's scheme closely enough. Written and directed by Gary Ross ("Pleasantville"), the picture is effective and satisfying—both realistic and poetic, and always vivid emotionally. Yet there's an element of Oscar-grabbing opportunism and bullying in "Seabiscuit." The movie is shaped as a national epic—not as a good story but as *the* good story, the story of you and me. Upbeat and redemptive, "Seabiscuit" at times seems no more than a galloping variant of "A Beautiful Mind" and "Forrest Gump" and "Chariots of Fire" and "Rocky" and the many other half-good, half-embarrassing melodramas about losers overcoming adversity. When a director exploits our hard-wired responses to pathos, he fails, so to speak, a test of honor. For all his skill and tact, Gary Ross often fails in that way.

The movie begins oddly, with photographs of early-twentieth-century automobile factories, and a familiar voice narrating. Puzzled, we wait for the gratuitous introduction to be over. Eventually, Ross, who has learned a lot about pacing and momentum since the soporific "Pleasantville," gets the story going by separately establishing the lives of the three principal human characters and then weaving them together. He begins with a quick tour through the early career of Charles Howard (Jeff Bridges), an Easterner who went West, sewed up the Buick franchise in Northern California, and became a wealthy man. As Howard, Jeff Bridges has a big, broad smile, a hearty manner, and a gleaming intelligence disguised by the heartiness; his performance is a more complex and melancholy version of the grinning, upbeat businessman he played fifteen years ago in "Tucker: The Man and His Dream." Bridges never says anything remarkable, yet he convinces us that Howard is a wonderful entrepreneur-sportsman—a generous risk-taker with superb judgment. Howard loses a son in an automobile accident (not, as the movie tells it, his only son but one of four), becomes interested in Thoroughbreds as a kind of solace, and hires Tom Smith (Chris Cooper), a hardscrabble type who knows everything about horses, to be his trainer. The two have a folkloric meeting by a campfire, each sizing the other up with profound glances and a minimum of small talk. The meeting is so exquisitely polite it borders on unintentional comedy. Yet I was impressed with Ross's bold delicacy, the conservative-humanist approach to directing that evokes John Ford's strong-and-silent mythmaking manner. And, in Chris Cooper, Ross has an actor with genuine mythic qualities. Cooper turns Tom Smith into one of those unnerving people who say exactly what they want to say and nothing more. He creates interest by his insistent wariness, his mouth slightly open as if to receive the vibrations in the air, his head turning and nodding gently, the way a horse tastes the wind.

Tobey Maguire gives a tough, strong performance as the jockey Red Pollard.

ERIC PALMA

The final member of the triumvirate is the jockey Johnny (Red) Pollard (Tobey Maguire), a bitter young man abandoned by a prosperous family that has fallen on hard times. Pollard is a lousy boxer and a so-so jockey, but he has the same streak of ornery independence as Seabiscuit, and Tom Smith, watching the horse bucking at one end of a stable yard and Pollard brawling at the other, has an intuition that the two might suit each other. A calculating young actor, Maguire draws attention to himself by slowing down the pace; he holds the camera with his big eyes, his slightly goofy smile, and his scratchy voice confidingly lowered to the microphone's intimate ear. Maguire is the Seabiscuit of movie stars—he seems to lack the physical equipment for the job, but don't make the mistake of underestimating him. His Red Pollard is a tough, strong performance. The adolescent softness has gone out of Maguire; he makes Pollard a tense, willful spark plug eager to take punishment, a man of limited talent determined to prevail.

Ross brings the story together with a series of silent but momentous recognition scenes. Even the horse has one, stopping in its tracks and eying Smith at length. Those moments in which men (or horses) look at someone and just *know* are popular tropes in Hollywood, where every producer's vanity is feathered by the assurance that he can judge talent on the spot. The recognition scenes are part of the movie's legendary American tone—aided by the imitation-Copland music, by Randy Newman, and the softly lyrical views of wide-open spaces and the beautiful shots of a horse grazing under a tree or being drawn slowly through a yard by a disconsolate boy in a cap. Ross is better at pastoral enchantment than Robert Redford was in his limp, roaming-in-the-gloaming movies, "The Horse Whisperer" and "The Legend of Bagger Vance." Convinced that Seabiscuit was ruined by his earlier training, Smith, in the most thrilling moment of the film, says that he "just needs to learn how to be a horse again," and Pollard mounts up and takes off, racing with increasing exhilaration through the woods. The movie has scale, energy, and a persuasive sense of physical detail. The actual races, re-created from famous events at Pimlico, Belmont, Hollywood Park, and other tracks, are often shocking. Ross plunges us right into the shoulder-bashing melee—the nasty interplay among beasts and jockeys at super-high speed. A total of ten horses play Seabiscuit, and they all looked fierce to me.

If Ross had merely told his story and re-created the media folk culture of the thirties, the movie might have been a classic. The invented character Tick-Tock McGlaughlin (William H. Macy), a voluble, poeticizing radio announcer who specializes in constant excitement and stale metaphors, offers a blazing bit of comic atmosphere. But the documentary stuff seen at the beginning returns again and again. There are solemn crypts of photomontage, in which pictures of men and women in the Depression, gaunt-faced and desperate, are accompanied by the familiar voice, which is, of course, that of the historian David McCullough, who narrated Ken Burns's documentaries about the Civil War and baseball. He tells us that Seabiscuit, like the unemployed, was cast aside and forgotten, but the horse fought back, and eventually he, along with the New Deal, rallied the nation. Somehow he *became* the nation, lifting itself out of the Depression. McCullough's narration—liberal and humane, witty but not sarcastic, knowing but not clever—is an ideal voice for a documentary, but it's wrong for a narrative film. It argues for the rightness, the sanity of its own intelligently rueful point of view—it's like a seal of approval. Why wasn't Ross content to just let the movie make the point? We can see for ourselves that thousands of destitute people adore the come-from-behind animal. The overexplicitness is a form of special pleading—Ross borrows the high authority of PBS rather than achieving something better through dramatic representation.

The hard sell also forces phony meanings onto the material. After all, Seabiscuit was not some prole nag. His sire was Hardtack and his grandfather was Man o' War, both great racehorses. He's as highborn as Franklin D. Roosevelt, who also overcame a handicap to become a winner, and who would have made a more appropriately analogous figure to Seabiscuit than the down and out. Howard and Smith liberated the fighting spirit of a warrior-aristocrat; that's how they turned Seabiscuit into a champion. Despite all the talk in the movie about handicaps and lost men, the horse and his three handlers are redeemed by overwhelming popular success. And the movie tries to sweep itself aboard that onrushing victory train. At its worst, the triumphalism of "Seabiscuit" is not far from the shiny American glow emanating from an official Presidential-campaign film. This is a superbly crafted piece of salesmanship—a celebration of idiosyncrasy that turns out to be one of the squarest movies ever made. ♦

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THE BACK PAGE BY PAUL SLANSKY

THE NINTH HUNDRED DAYS: THE QUIZ

1. “This ain’t the end of it—we’re going to have some more.” Who said that, and about what?

(a) George W. Bush, regarding wars in the Middle East.

(b) Representative Tom DeLay (R-Texas), regarding tax cuts.

(c) Vice-President Dick Cheney, regarding obscenely lucrative government contracts awarded to Halliburton.

(d) An unnamed newspaper copy editor, regarding headlines containing the words “cry” (or “cried,” or “crying”) and “Wolfowitz.”

2. True or false: Barring an economic miracle that would trigger the creation of more than two million jobs in the next eighteen months, George W. Bush will end this term as the first President since Jimmy Carter to oversee a net loss in employment.

Match the Bush judicial nominee with his or her decision or statement.

3. James Leon Holmes.
4. William Pryor.
5. Carolyn Kuhl.
6. Priscilla Owen.

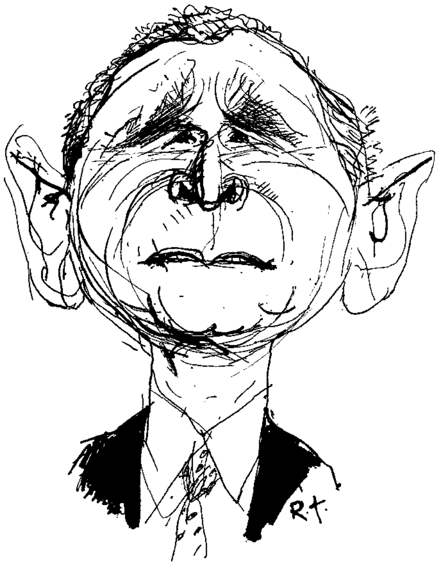
(a) Ruled against a woman who claimed that her privacy had been violated by a doctor who allowed a drug salesman to hang out in the room with them—and laugh at her—while the doctor examined her breasts.

(b) Argued that the Violence Against Women Act was unconstitutional.

(c) Consistently ruled to restrict access to abortion without parental consent.

(d) “The wife is to subordinate herself to her husband . . . to place herself under the authority of the man.”

7. What was a likely contributing factor in George W. Bush’s stumbling off a Segway scooter?



(a) His joking efforts to “turn this sumbitch to the far right.”

(b) The tennis racquet in one hand, which kept him from operating the controls properly.

(c) His preoccupation with convincing Americans that those two trailers we found in Iraq should qualify as weapons of mass destruction.

(d) His crankiness as a result of having given up sweets.

Who said what?

8. “The problem isn’t that Democrats are on the wrong side of the issues. It’s that they are afraid to make an issue of being on the right side.”

9. “Damn, fellas, we ought to be beating our chests every morning. We ought to look in the mirror and get proud and suck in our bellies and stick out our chests and say, ‘Damn, we’re Americans,’ and smile.”

10. “I think the Bush Administration is doing the best they can do with what they have to work with.”

11. “Mr. Bush has behaved like a profligate parent who spends every dollar the family has accumulated, mortgages everything the family owns and maxes out every credit card he can get his hands on.”

(a) Columnist Bob Herbert.

(b) Columnist Arianna Huffington.

(c) General Jay Garner.

(d) Actress Teri Garr.

12. Whose head did George W. Bush kiss?

(a) Dick Cheney’s, as they watched U.S. troops topple a statue of Saddam Hussein.

(b) Ari Fleischer’s, after he informed the President of his resignation as press secretary.

(c) Dennis Miller’s, after the comedian performed at his fund-raiser.

(d) George Tenet’s, as Bush informed the C.I.A. director of his new nickname, Fall Guy.

13. How did George W. Bush describe his wife?

(a) “My much better half.”

(b) “The only woman I’ve ever loved.”

(c) “The cream in my coffee.”

(d) “The lump in the bed next to me.”

14. Three of these statements were made by George W. Bush. Which one was made by Donald Rumsfeld?

(a) “I think war is a dangerous place.”

(b) “First, let me make it very clear: poor people aren’t necessarily killers. Just because you happen to be not rich doesn’t mean you’re willing to kill.”

(c) “The true strength of America happens when a neighbor loves a neighbor just like they’d like to be loved themselves.”

(d) “Stuff happens.”

Answers:
(1) b, (2) False—he’ll be the first President since Herbert Hoover, (3) d, (4) b, (5) a, (6) c, (7) b, (8) b, (9) c, (10) d, (11) a, (12) b, (13) d, (14) d.

RICHARD THOMPSON

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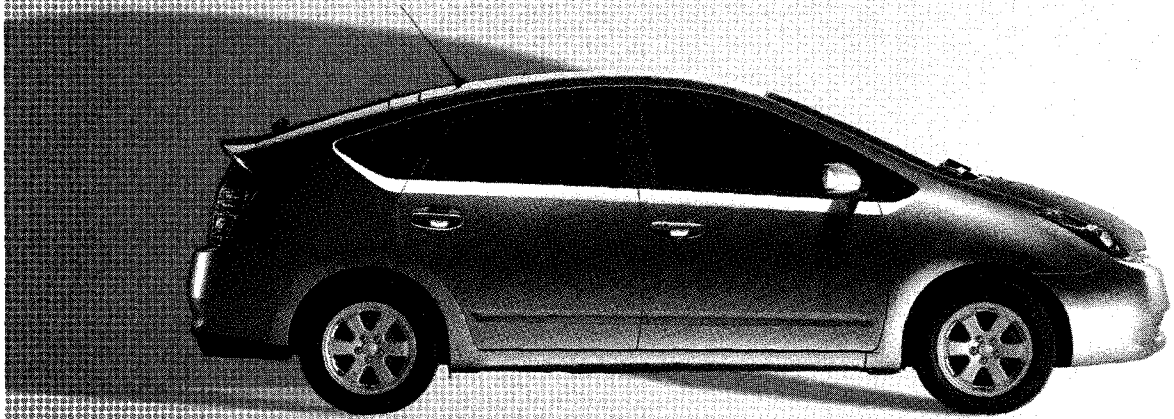

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